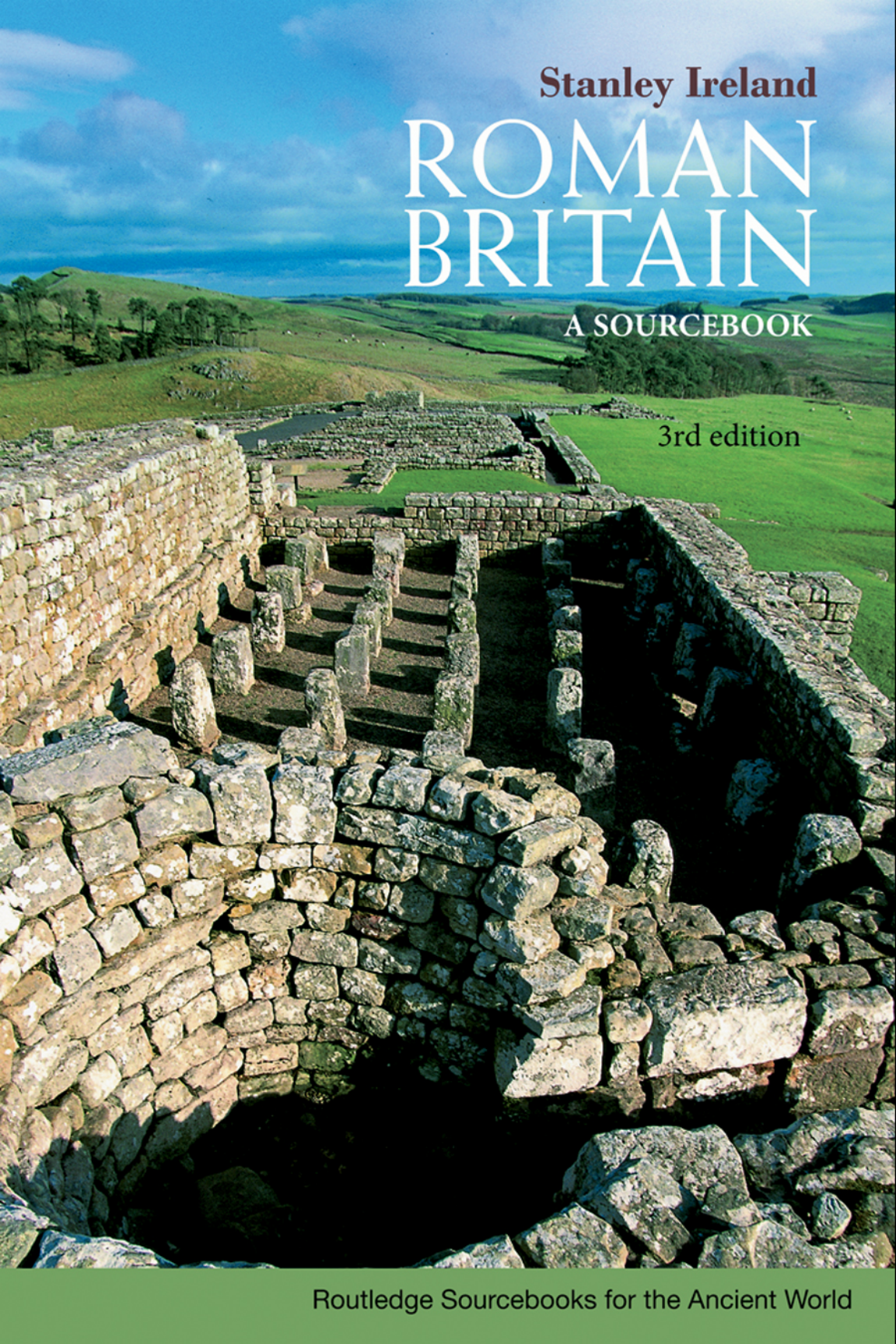




Stanley Ireland

ROMAN BRITAIN

A SOURCEBOOK

3rd edition

Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World

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ROMAN BRITAIN: A SOURCEBOOK

Roman Britain: A Sourcebook has established itself as the only comprehensive collection of source material on the subject. It incorporates literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence for the history of Britain under Roman rule, as well as translations of major literary sources.

This new edition includes not only recently discovered material but also the texts of Caesar's commentaries on his expeditions to Britain in 55 and 54 BC, as well as relevant sections of Tacitus' biography of his father-in-law, the former governor of Britain. The inclusion of these pivotal texts, which provide the most detailed account of the Roman campaigns in Britain, significantly underlies the volume's usefulness to all students of Roman Britain.

Though most of the material is arranged chronologically, there are also thematic sections on geography, religion and social and economic activity. Each section is prefaced by an introductory note, and the inclusion of illustrations and maps enhances the attractiveness of this updated collection as a teaching tool and a work of reference.

Stanley Ireland is a Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at Warwick University.

ROMAN BRITAIN

A sourcebook

Third edition

Stanley Ireland

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The sources for Roman Britain are numerous, varied and in many cases not readily accessible even in their original Greek or Latin forms. In producing the present volume, therefore, I have had two principal aims: first, to assemble as many as possible of those sources that would otherwise be obtainable by readers only with difficulty or at considerable expense, and second, through translation, to make them available to the growing number of students who approach the history of Roman Britain through the medium of English. The translations themselves have no pretensions to literary merit: they are workhorses rather than works of art, designed to represent accurately the contents of the originals without the addition of stylistic flourishes or any attempt to tone down the turgidity of many later writings. Since the sources are also, in many cases, chance survivors from the world of antiquity, and as such often present a fragmentary picture of events, I have sought to connect them by means of explanatory passages. It should be stressed, however, that such connection exists to set the sources in their context and establish the interrelationship of their contents. It was not designed as a substitute for the many excellent textbooks now in print, which remain essential for any proper interpretation of the evidence.

The sheer quantity of material available for the study of Roman Britain has led inevitably to the need for selectivity, but the process of selection has aimed at providing as wide a spectrum as possible within the space available, even to the extent of including apparent nonsense in order to illustrate the pitfalls that litter the path to knowledge. In common with most other sourcebooks, evidence of a purely archaeological nature has not been included. Not only does it require lengthy description and analysis, but it is readily available in handbooks and journals. Of literary sources, the purely military sections of Caesar's commentaries and Tacitus' *Agricola* have likewise been omitted. To have done otherwise would have necessitated the exclusion of many other authors, and both are already well served by Penguin translations. Where, on the other hand, they provide material relevant to the geography, society or religion of Britain, this has been included for the sake of completeness of those sections and convenience of reference. Similarly omitted are the many, almost obligatory, references to the geography of Britain found in later writers; they add nothing to the overall

picture and on many occasions have clearly been inserted for the sake of form alone. In the case of inscriptions or numismatic evidence, their very number has meant that only a small fraction could be used. The deciding criteria have, therefore, been intrinsic importance combined with physical completeness or relative certainty of restoration. For obvious reasons, too, it is only rarely that uncertainties of textual reading have been discussed or alternative translations offered.

Collections of material relevant to the history of Roman Britain have been published before: J. C. Mann and R. G. Penman, *Literary Sources for Roman Britain* (Lactor 11) has long proved its usefulness. In the case of inscriptions, R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Vol. I, *Inscriptions on Stone* holds pride of place, though both M. C. Greenstock, *Some Inscriptions from Roman Britain* (Lactor 4) and A. R. Burn, *The Romans in Britain: An Anthology of Inscriptions* supplement the evidence found in Britain itself with material from elsewhere in the empire, while, for coins, G. Askew, *The Coinage of Roman Britain* serves as an excellent introduction. It is not the aim of the present volume to supersede what has already been produced, rather to make available within the confines of a single work something of what each severally provides.

In format, I have arranged the sources under three main headings. The first of these, dealing with the geography and peoples of Britain, sets the scene for Roman occupation in its various phases and thus forms the basis of the central sector, the political and military history, with which the majority of ancient writers concerned themselves. In the final section, religion, commerce and the social life of Britain, I have sought to draw together as far as possible those other facets of evidence which often provide a glimpse behind the face of official pronouncements to the cares and hopes of individuals.

When referring to the titles of sources, place names or official positions I have attempted, wherever feasible, to give both the original form and its modern equivalent or translation, one in the text, the other in round brackets (...). This, it is hoped, will facilitate use of the work in conjunction with textbooks, which often provide one or the other but seldom both. Exceptions inevitably occur: an often-used piece of ancient literature may be commonly known by its English title alone; more obscure works may have no widely accepted translated form. In other cases, omission of the alternative serves to prevent its use with frequently occurring names becoming oppressively obtrusive, or, as is the case with such widely accepted technical terms as 'Legate', etc., to establish an element of uniformity. Round brackets (...) are also employed to designate explanatory material not found or easily supplied in the original or to summarise passages of connecting narrative. In the majority of cases, an author's name has been followed by a reference to the century in which he lived or was active. The aim in doing this is to provide the reader with an immediate and handy reference by which a writer's closeness to his subject matter might be gauged. Where, however, several passages from the same author occur close together, I have not felt it necessary to repeat the dating on every occasion.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Inevitably, any work that seeks to provide a selection of sources runs the risk of omitting altogether aspects that some will deem essential, while indulging to an excessive degree what may otherwise appear trivial or plainly wrong. For omission, I can only plead ignorance or shortage of space; for the sin of commission, the belief that one of the greatest lessons to be learned is a healthy suspicion of what antiquity has transmitted to us. Recognition of arrant nonsense should put us well on our guard against accepting too readily what seems ostensibly plausible.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

When the *Sourcebook* appeared some nine years ago, it was clear that with time the discovery of new material would demand a second edition. I was encouraged to begin the task of accumulating this by the generally favourable reaction to the book from both reviewers and users, but I have benefited greatly from the publication of works that have brought together the finds from Bath and Vindolanda, as well as the gradual appearance of *RIB* II. In this revised edition, therefore, I have attempted to incorporate both the improvements suggested by others (most notably indicating by square brackets [...] the missing or restored sections of inscriptions) and the more useful and interesting of the new finds. As before, I have restricted the introduction of linking material to the bare essentials and the Bibliography largely to items cited in the text. To have included more would simply have duplicated information available in the many excellent handbooks that this volume is meant to supplement. To what extent I have succeeded in my aim of providing readers with a convenient store of original material I leave for others to decide.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

It is now twelve years since publication of the second edition of the *Sourcebook*, and while new discoveries have not been as spectacular as those I was able to include then, I have taken the opportunity here of sampling what has come to light, adding some material already known in order to broaden the base of examples, and including for the first time the commentaries of Caesar on his 55 and 54 BC invasions and relevant sections of Tacitus' *Agricola*. The absence of these two vital works, on the grounds that translations were readily available elsewhere, has always been seen by the author as the volume's major weakness, and I am grateful to the publishers for allowing their inclusion now. As always, I am acutely aware of what, in a perfect world, might be inserted, but trust that in its latest form the *Sourcebook* will continue to provide a useful source of direct access to Rome's most northerly province.

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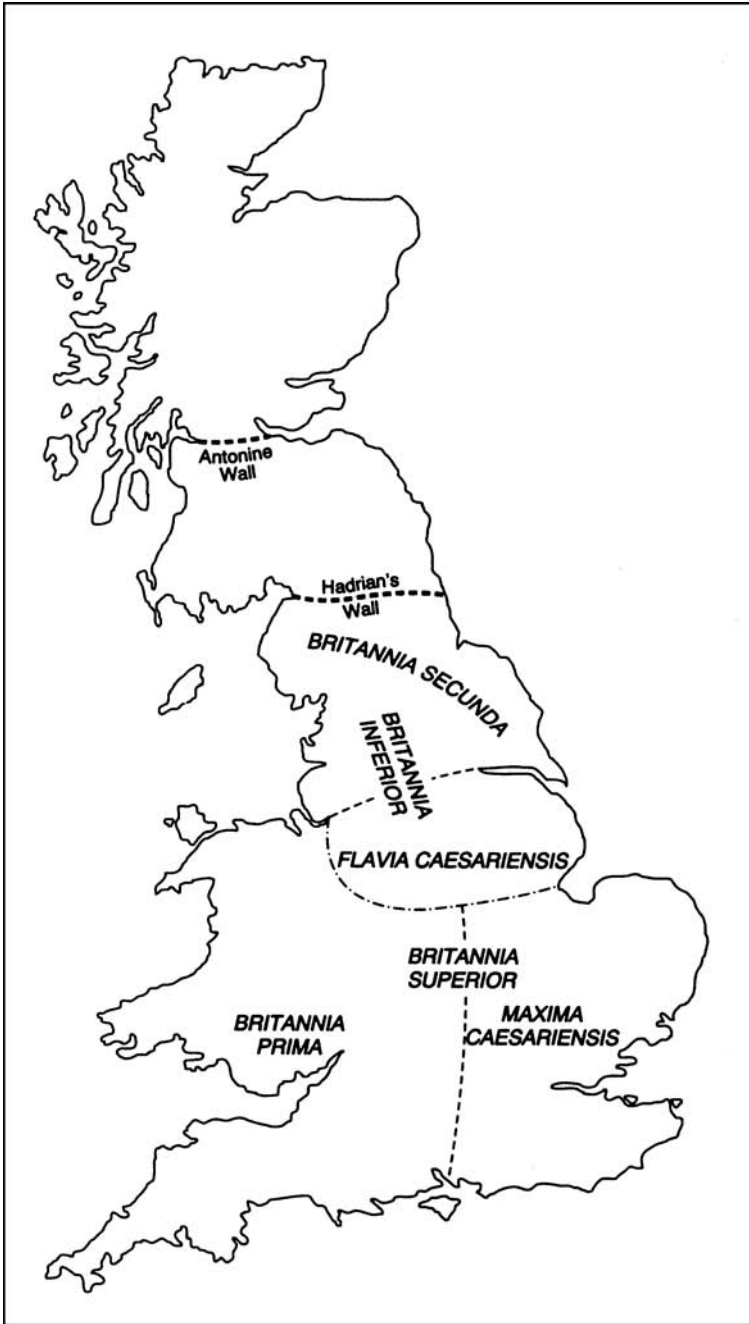
The author wishes to express his thanks to B. A. Seaby Ltd. for permission to reproduce illustrations to §63, 64, 120, 121, 122, 142, 143, 153, 154, 181, 182, 183, 190, 217, 223, 227, 269.

ABBREVIATIONS

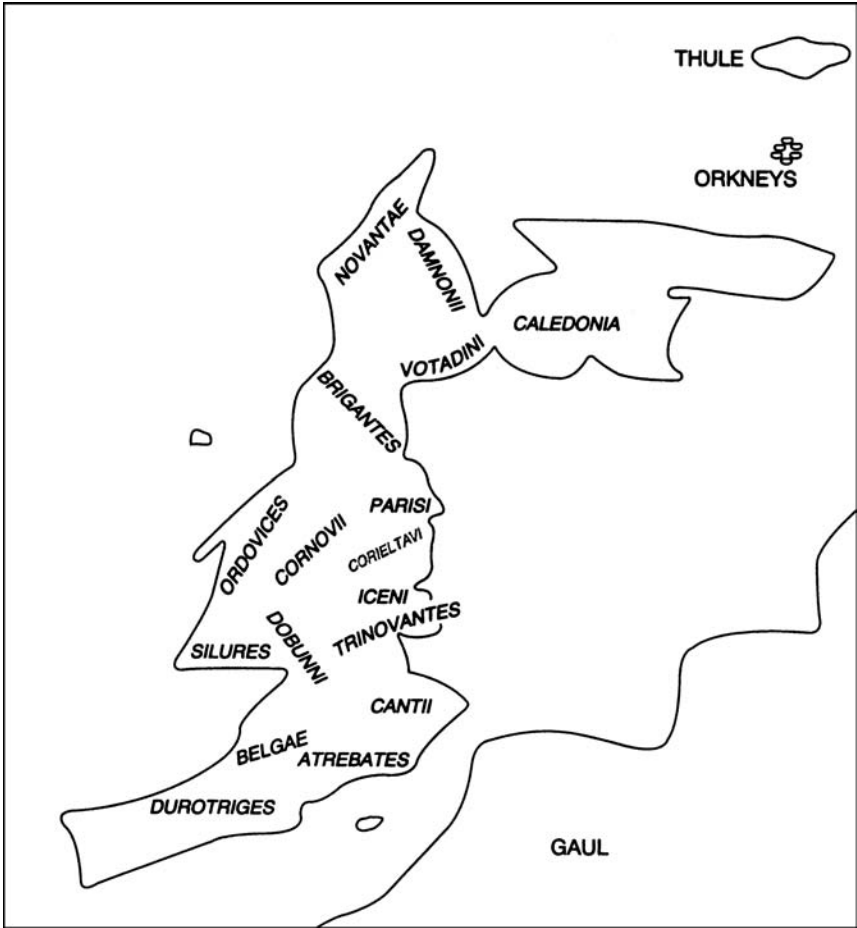
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
PSAS	Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
RIB	The Roman Inscriptions of Britain
RIC	Roman Imperial Coinage
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik



Map 1: The Tribes of Britain



Map 2: The Provinces of Britain



Map 3: Britain according to Ptolemy (2nd C. AD)

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest contacts of Caesar's invasions to the break-up of the Western Empire, the history of Rome's involvement with the island of Britain spans a period of nearly five centuries. It is not the purpose of this Introduction, however, to attempt a survey of those years – these already exist in much greater detail than would ever be possible here – but rather to examine the sources, be they literary, epigraphic or numismatic, that form the substance of this book and to indicate some of the problems and difficulties encountered in their use.

Despite the volume of material upon which our understanding of Roman Britain is based, it remains an inescapable fact that this is but a fraction of what once existed. Unlike the historian of more modern times, for whom archival material exists in relative abundance, the student of antiquity is separated from his topic of enquiry not only by at least a millennium and a half but more importantly by a major cultural upheaval and a virtual collapse of learning in which many of the accumulated records of the classical world ceased to exist. In the case of literary works, what remained was then subjected to a further and protracted period of attrition in which survival became largely dependent upon the ability of their contents to inspire continued interest in the monks who laboured in the scriptoria of medieval monasteries. For it was only through their periodic and painstaking copying and recopying of manuscripts over the centuries that writers as diverse as Caesar, Claudian, Tacitus and Gildas exist for us today. Needless to say, however, the interests of the medieval monk were not always identical to our own, and our ability to study the tedious ruminations of this or that late grammarian is scant compensation for the loss of many major texts. In the case of inscriptions and coins, on the other hand, their survival has been more dependent upon pure chance, when concealment, either deliberate or accidental, has preserved them in whole or in part from the ravages of reuse or wanton destruction.

Faced, then, with a body of evidence which, for all its size, is incomplete, we have to recognise and accept that there are times, whole decades indeed, when our ignorance of events is almost total, caused by the failure of hardly any record to survive. The extent of our losses we see, for instance, when an author refers fleetingly to matters dealt with more fully in works or books no longer

extant: the reference by Tacitus to the military prominence of Venutius (§71) or that by Ammianus Marcellinus to the Areani in the reign of Constans (§262). In other cases, the source may survive but only in tantalisingly truncated form: the fragmentary books of Dio Cassius or the Epitomes of his histories produced in the eleventh century by the Byzantine monk Xiphilinus. Here too we can include the many damaged inscriptions such as the tombstone of Classicianus with its two missing lines (§80), or the even more fragmentary Agricola-inscription from St Albans (§106).

By way of contrast, other periods of the province's history appear endowed with a veritable superabundance of material either in the form of multiple surviving sources or the existence of a single work characterised by the depth and detail of its contents. The danger here is that we are tempted to compensate for what we lack elsewhere by attributing to such periods an emphasis and importance that is out of proportion to their real significance. The career of Agricola might well be a case in point. The prominent position enjoyed by his six-year governorship, its virtual domination of the closing decades of the first century AD, rest entirely upon the biography written by his son-in-law Tacitus. Remove that and he sinks to the same level of obscurity as many ostensibly eminent governors whose achievements, for want of extant records, we cannot assess with any degree of certainty.

A somewhat similar problem arises for those periods in which sources of information are less than common: the danger of our uncritically accepting what in more favourable circumstances might well be dismissed as garbled conjecture on the part of the author. This becomes particularly evident at the very end of Roman Britain when we are faced by a writer such as Gildas, attempting to reconstruct in the sixth century the breakdown of Roman rule that had taken place 100 years earlier and for whom historical truth was less important than the religious significance perceived within events. At the same time, however, we need to be aware that by rejecting too readily what Gildas says we may equally pass over the germ of truth that lies within his narrative.

In addition to those general considerations of distorted emphasis outlined above, distortions which arise primarily from the incompleteness of our evidence, others exist that are more specific to the individual type of source material. These we shall see as we deal with the sources themselves.

The literary evidence

Of all the varied forms of evidence we possess for Roman Britain, by far the most productive of detailed information are the literary works of ancient writers, in both Latin and Greek, prose and verse. It is largely to these indeed that we owe our ability to trace the detailed historical developments that occurred, be they extensions of the province and the resistance encountered, the shifting stances of client rulers and the Roman attitude to them, major rebellions and the Roman reaction, internal dissension and the usurpation of power, or external

threats and the havoc wrought by barbarian invasion. No less important than the narrative account they provide, however, is the motivation many of our sources attribute to those involved in the history of the province; for it is in this that we glimpse something of the individual writer's approach to his subject and his ability to analyse and interpret critically the events he describes. This in turn affects our estimation of his reliability, acumen and ultimately his value as a source.

At the same time, it goes without saying that in dealing with so extensive a period we are presented with a body of literary evidence that displays within itself a wide diversity of form, purpose and underlying rationale. The prose works alone include such varied genres as historical commentaries, biography, letters, encyclopedic and geographical compilations, panegyrics, religious tracts and philosophy. As a result, we have to recognise the need for an element of flexibility in our own approach. We can no more demand of authors working in the same genre but separated from one another by up to 400 years identical methods of treating their material than we can apply the same criteria of judgement to writers contemporary with one another but engaged in the production of widely differing genres. Nor by the same token should we look for the same degree of relevance and accuracy in a writer treating Roman Britain as his central theme and one for whom it supplies but a passing reference.

Within prose literature, the most obviously relevant genre to the study of Roman occupation is historiography, but if we are to gain any proper appreciation of the information given, we need to be aware not only of the individual historian's relationship to the period he is treating but sensitive also to the influences at work on him and the prejudices to which he is prone. A figure such as Caesar dealt with contemporary events in which he was intimately involved; others, in contrast, chose to treat either a wider time span or themes of which they had little or no first-hand experience and were thus dependent upon earlier records, the reliability of which is usually beyond our power to determine. All, however, were inescapably affected either by the environment in which they worked or their own personal preferences and aims. The disinterested scholar seeking absolute truth was no more a feature of the ancient world than he is of the modern. Thus, while it would be wrong of us to suggest that the historians of antiquity set out deliberately to falsify their material or to mislead their readers, it would be equally naive to regard them as infallibly correct in their judgements or unaffected by their own preoccupations. In the case of Caesar, the veneer of impartiality and the clarity of his third-party narration, which are such features of his commentaries, overlie a distinct autobiographical tendency to self-justification. What he tells us of his motives, his analysis of events, of the events themselves, is largely determined by the image of his career and personality he wished to project. Similarly, with Tacitus, his treatment of imperial history in the first century AD is coloured by the fact that he wrote as a member of a senatorial order that had only recently emerged from a bout of imperial repression.

In many respects, the existence of more than one source dealing with the same events serves as a valuable means of comparison. Successive versions

clearly derived from one another, for example, enable us to trace the development of historical connections and emphases from one century to another, as important in the case of such ostensible fictions as that which attributed the construction of Hadrian's wall to Severus as it is with more credible events. In other instances, one writer may serve to set within a broader perspective the evidence of another: the later reassessment by Dio Cassius of the significance to be attached to Caesar's invasion in 55 BC (§24), or the contemporary reaction of Cicero to the 54 BC invasion in letters he wrote from the heart of the empire (§29–34).

Though differing from historiography in the greater weight it places upon the delineation of character and motivation, biography shares with it the capacity to direct the treatment of its subject to a predetermined and often biased end. So, for example, in Tacitus' *Agricola*, a work that incorporates features from many genres within its biographical framework, the achievements of previous expansionist governors, for all their intrinsic merits and significance, become largely reduced to the status of preliminaries to the great push north, while to the necessary intervals of consolidation and recovery under governors such as Petronius Turpilianus and Trebellius Maximus is attached the shameful name of sloth and indolence. Even more remarkable is the way Tacitus is able to implicate Domitian in *Agricola*'s death while ostensibly claiming there is no evidence of any involvement on the part of the emperor. This capacity to damn by negation or silence is no less evident in Suetonius' treatment of Caligula's abortive attempt at invasion (§54). By careful selection of information and manipulation of phrasing the reader is inescapably directed towards the conclusion that responsibility for the fiasco lay solely with the emperor's madness.

For all their differences of emphasis and approach, historiography and biography – indeed all the literary genres of antiquity – share this much in common: that their aim was as much the production of literature as the provision of information. As a result, they were susceptible to a whole range of embellishment for the sake of their literary function. We see this most clearly when a writer of history or biography punctuates his narrative with speeches that are clear fabrications – the flowing Latin rhetoric placed into the mouth of Caratacus or Calgacus by Tacitus, or the Greek attributed to Boudicca by Dio Cassius. It was never the writer's purpose to suggest that such speeches were actually made in the form recorded. Rather, they exist to enliven the narrative with sentiments appropriate to the occasion in a manner designed to appeal to the ancient love of oratory. The existence at times of parallel speeches from the Roman side reveals indeed their origins in the *suasoriae* (exercises in imaginary advice) and *controversiae* (fictitious debates) that were a staple element of classical education. Even the apparent recognition by writers that Roman domination was not without its darker side, a theme frequently given to native British leaders, was itself in part but a feature of oratorical training. Tacitus may have chosen to paint the picture of the noble savage struggling to maintain his freedom and independence, but there is little to indicate that he deviated so radically from the rest of his class as to reject outright the City's imperial mission.

To compilers of encyclopedic information such as Pliny the Elder, and geographers such as Strabo, no less than to historians such as Caesar and Diodorus Siculus, we owe our evidence for the social and political structure of Celtic Britain and the customs and religious beliefs of its inhabitants. The information they provide, however, comes to us not as disinterested factual records but already affected by the theories and assumptions upon which the individual author based his reasoning and conclusions. That many such presuppositions were erroneous needs no demonstration. In the case of geographical knowledge, limitations in technical expertise and instrumentation, a theoretical approach that depended heavily upon deductive reasoning, and a tendency to rely upon received wisdom rather than empirical fact or personal experience led inevitably to many long-held axioms that proved ultimately untenable. We see this in the widespread belief that Britain lay between Gaul and Spain, or the 90-degree shift in the position of north Scotland indicated by the geographer Ptolemy in the second century AD. In the realm of social custom and religious belief, on the other hand, the frequent use of explanation by analogy, equating what was found in Britain with a supposed Graeco-Roman counterpart, inevitably introduced the danger of distortion either by simplification or by ill-matched inference. In a very basic form, it appears in the equation of a Celtic deity with a Roman counterpart as the result of some minor point of similarity. On a deeper level, interpretation of the druidic belief in life after death in terms of Pythagorean doctrine on the transmigration of souls creates a series of implications that may ultimately have little basis in reality.

Towards the end of Roman Britain there appeared a number of genres more obviously devoted to the propagation of a single viewpoint than anything hitherto seen. To these belong the writings of Christian apologists, for whom fact becomes patently subservient to message, liable to embroidery, alteration or expansion by edifying fiction for the benefit of the faithful. This is no less true of Gildas, seeking to explain the decline of Romano-British society in terms of its sinfulness, than it is of the miracles that surround the visits of St Germanus. Equally coloured are the products of third- and fourth-century panegyrists, whose prime function, maintaining the cult of the personality, led inevitably to an accentuation of success and the virtual elimination of any reference to failure.

In turning from prose to verse we need not be surprised that the output of Latin poets furnishes useful information on Roman Britain, so long as we bear in mind that its original purpose was far removed from the use to which we now put it. In the case of the poets of the Augustan age, their frequent references to the prospect of invasion were clearly designed not only to maintain a point of contact with the achievements of Caesar but also to provide an outlet for the traditional Roman belief in territorial expansion in an empire for the moment set on the more mundane paths of consolidation and stability. Even so, they provide an important source for policies and events which, while perhaps designed to impress themselves upon the kings of Britain rather than have any real military effect, serve to mirror contemporary concerns and modes of thought. With

the fourth-century poet Claudian, on the other hand, his works serve to supplement our other sources with details, no matter how vaguely expressed, that would otherwise not be available to us. In such circumstances, it is the historian's task to delve beneath the outer poetic form to reach whatever truth lies there.

The epigraphic evidence

In contrast to the evidence of our literary sources, which comes to us through the process of copying century after century, with all the problems this implies for the maintenance of accuracy, the inscriptions of Roman Britain provide not only an immediate and direct contact with the world of antiquity but also much of the information we possess on the workings of the province and the lives of individuals. In form, they range from the monumental, both public and private, on the costliest of stone, to the humblest of scratchings on walls and potsherds, from the lofty pronouncements of official policy to the loves and hatreds of society's lower levels.

To official inscriptions recording the construction or repair of buildings we owe much of our ability to follow the history of individual sites, to establish those responsible for the various phases of building, and at times even why the repair became necessary: whether through the depredations of enemy action or simple deterioration with time. In the case of the northern walls, indeed, it is the evidence of epigraphy that even allows us to reconstruct the process of building, section by section. In other cases, such official inscriptions mark the opening up of new areas to economic exploitation, the movement of troops from one posting to another, or the movement of individuals from one unit to another. In this respect, diplomas awarding citizenship on retirement to members of the auxiliary forces, or honorary dedications set up by municipalities to their benefactors are of particular value. Both serve in fact to reveal for us the variety of career patterns that imperial service might take. At the same time, however, the very immediacy of official inscriptions should not blind us to their usefulness as a vehicle of propaganda for the administration of the day, seeking to present an official version that might well be at variance with reality. In this respect, loyalty declarations, ostensibly set up by sections of the army in the form of religious offerings, become particularly suspect, especially when other sources point to unrest and disaffection. In such cases, indeed, it might not be altogether inappropriate to regard the level of profuseness as being in inverse proportion to the truth of the situation.

Inscriptions of a more personal and private nature are in many ways one of the few means at our disposal for glimpsing the lives of individuals and groups in all their aspects, building up in a way the literary sources never attempted a picture of business concerns and religious attachments, friendship and enmity, family life and inevitably, through the many funerary inscriptions that survive, of death. Here it is that the range of materials used is at its widest, reflecting no doubt the varied spectrum of society itself. Not surprisingly, in a world still very

much at the mercy of natural forces, many inscriptions centre upon the comfort afforded by religion, dedications to this god or that expressing hopes and fears: a safe return, success in business, or promotion. The last of these also shows how easy it was for apparently private offerings to be made with one eye on officialdom: Tineius Longus' dedication to Anociticus (§345) or Donatianus' allegory (§424) are classic examples. In many instances, it is also such inscriptions that provide our sole evidence for the existence of a cult within the province: the references to the shrine of Isis in London are notable but not unique examples (§426–7). Though gratitude and thanks loom large among the sentiments voiced, the less sympathetic emotions are not altogether absent, as we see in the curses, inscribed in often florid terms on lead and then buried, calling down upon those responsible for theft or some other misdemeanour a whole range of unpleasant mishaps. In the vast majority of cases, however, it is only in death that the details of life survive, the brief glimpse provided by the tombstone of a career in the army, a dutiful wife or husband, the love of parent and child, the bond between freedman and patron. The formulaic expression of grief which operated then no less than today cannot altogether extinguish the pathos that so often characterises the details given. At the same time, though, such inscriptions are also valuable tools in establishing patterns of life expectancy: the relative frequency of infant and child mortality, the chances of reaching 100, the dangers of military service, or simply of being a wife and mother.

The numismatic evidence

From the point of view of the historian, the value of coinage as a means of establishing and dating many of the major events of Roman Britain has long been recognised. It rests indeed upon two basic characteristics of the coins themselves. First, there is the ease with which individual issues may be dated by reference to the number of times the emperor concerned had held tribunician power, conferred upon accession and renewed annually thereafter, or the less frequent consulship, since both form a regular element of obverse legends down to the middle of the third century. Second, there is the frequency of special issues commemorating specific events within the province: Roman victories against external enemies, imperial visitations, a return to legitimate power after a period of usurpation, the claims to legitimacy by those same usurpers, or the re-establishment of military and economic stability. The very fact that so many issues were minted is itself a powerful indication that governments clearly recognised the importance of coins as a means of disseminating news, even if doubt continues to surround the question of to whom such information was directed – the army, for which much of the coinage struck was initially intended as pay, or the civilian population. Equally problematic from our own point of view is the degree to which those who used the coins ever noticed the message they offered, or the speed with which new issues became submerged within the coinage already in circulation. These, however, are problems for us; for the

INTRODUCTION

administration involved variety of issues was clearly regarded as a useful and valuable practice. At the same time, though, we need to recognise, as in the case of epigraphy, the fine line that separates information from propaganda and to be aware that such declarations as *Felicitas temporum* (Happy days are here again) or *Concordia militum* (Harmony among the troops) could be as much a pious hope as an expression of the truth.

If in writing this Introduction I have tended to emphasise the problems that may be encountered in any approach to the sources for Roman Britain, it is to impress upon readers the need for caution in using material that presents only a partial picture of events and from which we are separated by so great a span of time. Not everything, however, is unrelieved blackness or subject to the distorting influence of bias. The very candour and directness of many authorities win our easy acceptance of the evidence they present, and even when a source appears deliberately slanted, our ability to recognise this is the first step towards setting its contents in their true perspective.

Part I

THE GEOGRAPHY AND PEOPLE
OF BRITAIN

THE EARLIEST CONTACTS

For all its momentous significance as regards future relations between Britain and the Empire of Rome, the invasion launched by Julius Caesar in the late summer of 55 BC was in many respects merely the culminating event in a long history of contact between the Mediterranean world and the largest of Europe's offshore islands. As early as the fourth century BC, the Greek colony of Massilia (Marseilles) knew of the island's existence, and the years c. 320 BC saw a partial exploration by its navigator Pytheas. Evidence of even earlier contact dating from the sixth century BC was long thought to be reflected, if at several hands removed, in the bare mention of 'the island of the Albiones' contained in the fourth century AD *Ora maritima* (*Sea Coast*) of Avienus. Recent study by Hawkes,¹ however, has demonstrated that this probably represents no more than the transference to a British context, perhaps by the mid-fourth century BC writer Ephoros, of material that originally described the south-west coast of Spain, where there was also a tribe of Albiones. Despite this, however, the attribution to Britain of the name Albion, together with its Greek variations in spelling, was certainly old, and it continued to be given sporadically by writers in antiquity, if only at times as a name long superseded:

1. Pliny the Elder (1st C. AD), *Natural History*, IV, 102

It was itself called Albion, while all the islands of which I shall shortly be making mention are called the British Isles.

2. Pseudo-Aristotle (? 1st C. AD), *On the Cosmos*, 393b12

In it (Ocean) there are two very large islands called the British Isles, Albion and Ierne (Ireland). They are larger than those already mentioned and lie beyond Celtic territory.

At what stage the change to the name 'Britain' came about is unknown, but again it would seem that this was in fact the standardised form of what had originally been 'Pritain':

3. Diodorus Siculus (late 1st C. BC) V, 21, 1

Opposite that part of Gaul which borders on the Ocean ... there are many islands in the Ocean, of which the largest is called the Prettanian island.²

4. Eustathius (12th C. AD), *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, 492

There are those who write Ambrax the old-fashioned way with a P and (call) the region Ampracia, just as (they call) the Brettanic Isles Prettanian. The spelling with B is more common.

5. Eustathius, *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, 568

The size of the Brettanides (British Isles), which others, as previously stated, call the Prettanides with a P, is given not only by Dionysius, as has been mentioned above, but also by Ptolemy in his work on geography.

Of the account given by Pytheas of Massilia himself, describing his visit to Britain, nothing survives except allusions, either direct or indirect, in later writers. So, for instance, Pliny the Elder refers to information given by the fourth- to third-century BC historian Timaeus which can only have come from Pytheas:

6. Pliny the Elder (1st C. AD), *Natural History*, IV, 104

The historian Timaeus says that six days' sail up-Channel³ from Britain is the island of Mictis (Wight⁴) in which tin is produced. Here he says the Britons sail in boats of wickerwork covered in sewn leather. There are those who record other islands: the Scandiae, Dumna, the Bergi, and Berrice, the largest of them all, from which the crossing to Thyle (Thule) is made. One day's sail from Thyle is the frozen sea called by some the Cronian sea.

It is likewise to Pytheas that many of the details given by Caesar and Diodorus Siculus in the first century BC must ultimately be traced back:

7. Caesar (mid-1st C. BC), *Gallic War*, V, 13

The island is triangular in shape, with one side opposite Gaul. One corner of this side, situated in Cantium (Kent), is where nearly all the ships from Gaul land, and points east; the lower corner (Land's End) points south. The length of this side is about 500 miles. Another side faces Spain⁵ and the west. In this direction lies Hibernia (Ireland), half the size of Britain, so it is thought, and as

distant from it as Britain is from Gaul. Midway between the two is the island called Mona (Man⁶), and in addition it is thought a number of smaller islands are close by, in which, according to some writers, there are thirty days of continuous darkness around midwinter.⁷ We ourselves discovered nothing about this from our enquiries, though we observed from accurate measurements using the waterclock that the nights are shorter than on the continent. The length of this side, according to the opinion of the natives, is 700 miles. The third side faces north and has no land opposite it, but its (east) corner points generally towards Germany. It is thought to be 800 miles in length. Thus the whole island is 2,000 miles in circumference.

8. Diodorus Siculus (late 1st C. BC), V, 21, 3–6

Britain is triangular in shape rather like Sicily, though its sides are unequal in length. It stretches at an angle alongside Europe and the nearest point to the continent, called Cantium (Kent), is said to be some 100 stadia (*c.* 11.5 miles) from Europe at the place where the (North) sea has its outlet (into Ocean). The second promontory, called Belerium (Land's End) is said to be four days' sail from the continent. The last is recorded as reaching out into the open sea and is called Orkas (Duncansby Head). The shortest of its sides, which lies alongside Europe, measures 7,500 stadia (*c.* 860 miles), the second, stretching from the Channel up to the (northern) tip, 15,000 stadia (*c.* 1,725 miles), the last 20,000 stadia (*c.* 2,300 miles), so that the whole circumference of the island measures 42,500 stadia (*c.* 4,900 miles). They say that Britain is inhabited by tribes that are aboriginal, and in their lifestyle preserve the old ways; for they make use of chariots in their wars, just as tradition tells us the ancient Greek heroes did in the Trojan war, and their houses are simple, built for the most part of reeds or logs. They harvest their grain crops by cutting off only the ears of corn and store them in covered barns. Each day they pick out the ripe ears, grind them, and in this way get their food. They are simple in their habits and far removed from the cunning and vice of modern man. Their way of life is frugal and far different from the luxury engendered by wealth. The island also has a large population, and the climate is very cold, since it actually lies under the Great Bear. It contains many kings and chieftains, who for the most part live in peace with one another.

Unfortunately for later travellers, not least Julius Caesar himself, much of what Pytheas had to say was only transmitted by later writers as evidence of his general untrustworthiness, in so far as he had recorded what current theory held to be impossible. This is nowhere clearer than in the case of Thule, probably Iceland though the coast of Norway has also been suggested, a land never again discovered by ancient mariners. By the end of the first century AD, in fact, the name itself had been transferred to the Shetlands:

9. Strabo (1st C. BC–1st C. AD), I, 4, 3

For Pytheas, who gives an account of Thule, has been found on examination to be an arrant liar, and those who have seen Britain and Ierne (Ireland) say nothing of Thule, though they mention other islands, small ones, around Britain ... Pytheas declares that the length of the island (Britain) is greater than 20,000 stadia (*c.* 2,300 miles), and he says that Cantium (Kent) is some days' sail from Celtica (Gaul). ... Therefore, a man who tells such great lies about well-known regions could hardly tell the truth about regions unknown to all.

10. Strabo, II, 4, 1

Polybius in his account of the geography of Europe says he passes over the ancient authorities, but examines those who criticise them, that is Dicaearchos and Eratosthenes ... and Pytheas, by whom many have been misled. Pytheas claimed he visited the whole of Britain that was accessible to him, gave the circumference of the island as more than 40,000 stadia (*c.* 4,600 miles), and in addition gave a description of Thule and those regions in which there was no longer land or sea or air as separate entities but a compound of them all like a jellyfish.

One result of such 'character assassination' is the association with Thule, and subsequent damning by association, of many facts clearly appropriate to Britain itself, but simply rejected out of hand:

11. Strabo, IV, 5, 5

As regards Thule, our information is even more uncertain (than it is for Ireland) on account of its distance; for people locate it as the most northerly of lands to which a name is given. However, the fact that what Pytheas says about it and about the other places in those parts is false, is clear from (what he tells us of) the districts we do know about. For in very many cases he has told falsehoods, as was stated earlier, so that it is clear he has been even less truthful as regards remote regions. And yet from the point of view of astronomy and mathematical theory he would seem to have made reasonable use of his data in asserting that those who live close to the frozen zone have a total lack of some cultivated crops and domesticated animals and a shortage of others, and that they live on millet and vegetables, fruit and roots. Those who have grain and honey, he says, also make a drink from them. The grain itself they thresh in large barns to which they bring the ears for storage, since they do not have clear sunshine. For threshing floors are useless owing to the lack of sun and the rain.⁸

THE ROMAN PERIOD

In addition to the political and military implications of Caesar's two expeditions, Roman penetration of Britain in the middle of the first century BC also brought with it additional and ostensibly first-hand information concerning the more southerly sectors of the island:

12. Caesar, *Gallic War*, V, 12

The interior of Britain is inhabited by people who claim on the strength of their own tradition to be indigenous to the island; the coastal districts by immigrants from Belgic territory who came after plunder and to make war – nearly all of them are called after the tribes from which they originated. Following their invasion they settled down there and began to till the fields. The population is very large, their homesteads thick on the ground and very much like those in Gaul, and the cattle numerous. As money they use either bronze or gold coins or iron bars with a fixed standard of weight. Tin is found inland,¹ iron on the coast, but in small quantities; the bronze they use is imported. There is every type of timber as in Gaul, with the exception of beech and pine. They have a taboo against eating hare, chicken, and goose, but they rear them for amusement and pleasure. The climate is more temperate than in Gaul, the cold spells being less severe.

13. Caesar, *Gallic War*, V, 14

Of all the Britons, by far the most civilised are the inhabitants of Cantium (Kent), a purely maritime region, whose way of life is little different from that of the Gauls. Most of those inhabiting the interior do not grow corn but live instead on milk and meat and clothe themselves in skins. All the Britons dye themselves with woad, which produces a blue colour, and as a result their appearance in battle is all the more daunting.² They wear their hair long and shave all their bodies with the exception of their heads and upper lip. Wives are shared between groups of ten or twelve men, especially between brothers and between fathers and sons. The offspring on the other hand are considered the children of the man with whom the woman first lived.

Towards the end of the first century BC, much of the information given by Caesar was clearly reworked by the geographer Strabo, though with one or two additions, the result no doubt of the increase in trade that followed the invasions:

14. **Strabo, IV, 5, 2**

There are four crossings which are commonly used in getting from the continent to the island, namely from the mouths of the Rivers Rhine, Seine, Loire and Garonne. Those who put to sea from the region around the Rhine do not, however, sail from the river estuary itself, but from the Morini, who are the neighbours of the Menapii and in whose territory lies Itium (Boulogne), used by the deified Caesar as a harbour when he crossed to the island. ... Most of the island is flat and thickly wooded, though many districts are hilly. It produces grain and cattle, gold, silver and iron. These are exported along with hides and slaves and dogs bred specifically for hunting. The Celts (Gauls) also use both these and their native breed in war. The men (of Britain) are taller than the Celts, not so blond, and of looser build. As an indication of their size I myself saw some in Rome little more than boys standing as much as half a foot above the tallest in the city, though they were bow-legged and in other respects lacking any gracefulness of body. Their customs are in some respects like those of the Celts, in other respects simpler and more barbaric. As a result, some of them, through their want of skill, do not make cheese, though they have no shortage of milk. They are also unskilled in horticulture or farming in general. They are ruled by chieftains. In war they mostly use chariots like some of the Celts.³ The forests are their cities; for they fortify a large circular enclosure with felled trees and there make themselves huts and pen their cattle,⁴ though not for a long stay. Their weather tends to rain rather than snow, and on days when there are no clouds, fog persists for a long time with the result that throughout the whole day the sun can be seen only for about three or four hours around noon. This also happens among the Morini and the Menapii and those living close to the Menapii.

Later still, following the Claudian invasion, the whole of Britain became subject to detailed exploration and exploitation by both the Roman army and the influx of merchants and speculators. Even the furthest reaches of Caledonia were to come under scrutiny as a result of Agricola's campaigns, recorded by his son-in-law:

15. **Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Agricola*, 10–12**

- 10 The position and inhabitants of Britain have been recorded by many writers, but it is not with a view to challenging their accuracy or ability that I bring these topics up again; rather because it was then (under Agricola) that the conquest of Britain was completed. For this reason, while earlier writers embroidered with their eloquence things that had yet to be fully investigated, I shall set

down the truth of the situation. Britain is the largest of the islands known to the Romans, and in terms of its extent and situation faces Germany in the east and Spain in the west. To the south, it actually lies within sight of Gaul, while its northern parts, with no land opposite them, are beaten by a vast open sea. The overall shape of Britain has been compared by Livy and Fabius Rusticus, the most eloquent of ancient and modern writers respectively, to an elongated shoulder-blade (i.e. rhombus) or an axe-head. This is indeed its shape as far as Caledonia, and the idea has been extended to the whole. However, once you have crossed (into Caledonia) there is a vast irregular tract of land stretching out from (what was considered) the furthestmost shore and tapering to a kind of wedge. It was then for the first time that a Roman fleet circumnavigated the coast of this remotest sea and established the fact that Britain was an island. At the same time it discovered and conquered hitherto unknown islands called Orcades (Orkneys).⁵ Thule (Shetland) too was sighted (but no landing made) since their orders went no further and winter was approaching. They did, however, report that the sea was sluggish and heavy to the oars, and was not set in motion as much as other seas even by the winds. The reason for this I suppose is that the land and mountains which are the source and cause of storms, are further apart, while the deep mass of the open sea is set in motion more slowly. Investigation of the nature and tides of Ocean is not, however, the purpose of this work, and besides many have already dealt with them. I would add just one thing: nowhere does the sea hold wider sway. This way and that its tidal currents flow, nor does it ebb and flow only up to the coast, but penetrates and winds its way deep inland, insinuating itself amidst the ridges and mountains as if in its own domain.

- 11 However, who the first inhabitants of Britain were, whether they were indigenous or immigrants, has not been sufficiently ascertained, as one might expect where barbarians are concerned. The physical types vary and from these variations come a number of theories. The red hair and large limbs of those who inhabit Caledonia affirm their German origin. The swarthy faces of the Silures and their generally curly hair, plus the fact that Spain lies opposite, leads one to believe that in ancient times Iberians crossed over and occupied this region. Those who live closest to the Gauls are like them, either because the influence of their (mutual) origin persists, or because the countries approach each other from north and south and as a result the (similarity of) climate has produced a (similar) physical appearance. Looking at the question overall, however, it seems likely that the Gauls occupied the nearby island. You would find (in Britain) the rites and religious beliefs of the Gauls. There is not much difference between them in language, the same boldness in courting danger and, when danger looms, the same panic in avoiding it. The Britons, however, display greater ferocity since they have not yet been enervated by a long period of peace. The Gauls too, we learn, were experts in warfare, but in recent times indolence and a life of ease have made their

appearance, with the resultant loss of valour and, at the same time, freedom. This has also happened to those of the Britons who were conquered at the outset (i.e. in the Claudian invasion); the rest remain what the Gauls once were.

- 12 Their strength is in their infantry; some tribes also fight in chariots. The nobleman is the driver; his retainers do the fighting. At one time they owed obedience to kings; now they are split into partisan factions under rival chieftains. Nothing indeed is more to our advantage against these very powerful tribes than the fact that they do not plan joint operations. It is rare for two or three tribes to come together in order to repel a common danger. So, they fight individually and are collectively defeated. The climate with its frequent rains and mist is wretched; yet extreme cold is absent. The length of the (summer) days is greater than that in our world; the nights are light and in the points of Britain furthest north short, so that you can hardly distinguish dusk from daybreak.⁶ If clouds do not get in the way, they say the sun's glow can be seen right through the night, and it does not set and rise but rather passes along (the horizon). Evidently the flat edge of the world with its low shadow does not project the darkness much; night therefore falls below the level of the sky and the stars. Except for olives, vines and the other usual products of warmer countries the soil will produce grain and is rich in cattle. Crops are slow to ripen, but germinate quickly, both factors stemming from the same cause, the great moisture of the earth and sky. Britain bears gold, silver and other metals which are the prize of victory. The Ocean too produces pearls, but these are dark and blue-black in colour. Some people think those who collect them lack skill since in the Red Sea (Indian Ocean) the pearl-oysters are torn from the rocks alive and breathing, while in Britain they are collected just as they are thrown up (on the shore). I am more ready to believe that the pearls lack quality rather than that we lack the desire for them.

For all their civilising influence in those parts of Britain directly controlled by Rome, this seems not to have extended far beyond the northern frontier, eventually established for good along Hadrian's wall. The following describes the tribes north of the frontier in the early years of the third century AD, the reign of Severus.

16. Epitome⁷ of Dio Cassius, LXXVI, 12, 1–5

There are among the Britons two very large tribes, the Caledonians and the Maeatae. The names of the others have been merged as it were into these. The Maeatae for their part live near the wall which divides the island into two, and the Caledonians beyond them. Both tribes inhabit wild and waterless mountains and desolate marshy plains and possess neither walls nor cities nor farms. Instead they live on their flocks, on game and on certain fruits, and though there are vast and limitless stocks of fish they do not eat them. They live in tents without clothes or shoes; they share their womenfolk and rear all their offspring in common. Their

form of government is for the most part democratic, and they have a great liking for plunder. For this reason they choose their boldest men to be their leaders. They go into battle both in chariots with small swift horses, and on foot. They are in addition very fast runners and very resolute when they stand their ground. Their weapons consist of a shield and a short spear with a bronze 'apple' at the end of the shaft which is designed to make a loud noise when shaken and thus terrify the enemy. They also have daggers. They are able to endure cold, hunger and all kinds of hardship; for they plunge into the marshes and stay there for many days with only their heads above water; in the forests they live on bark and roots, and in case of emergency they prepare a type of food, a piece of which, the size of a bean, when eaten, stops them feeling hunger or thirst. Such is the island of Britain and such are the inhabitants, at least in the hostile part.
cf.

17. Herodian (3rd C. AD), III, 14, 6-8

Most of (northern) Britain is marshy since it is constantly washed by the ocean tides. The barbarians are accustomed to swim in these marshes or to run through them with the water up to their waists. For the most part they are naked and think nothing of getting mud on themselves. Also, being unfamiliar with the use of clothing, they adorn their waists and necks with iron, considering this an ornament and a sign of wealth, just as other barbarians do gold. They tattoo⁸ their bodies with various designs and pictures of all kinds of animals. This is the reason they do not wear clothes: so as not to cover up the designs on their bodies. They are extremely warlike and bloodthirsty, though their armament consists simply of a narrow shield, a spear, and a sword that hangs beside their naked bodies. They are unfamiliar with the use of breastplates or helmets, considering them a hindrance in crossing the marshes. From these thick mists rise and cause the atmosphere in that region always to have a gloomy appearance.

Part II

THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORY

THE INVASIONS OF CAESAR

The invasion of 55 bc

Though initially it had been the need to defend Roman interests and territory in southern Gaul that in 58 bc drew Caesar into intervening in the affairs of tribes beyond the confines of his designated sphere of influence, the opportunities offered by Gaul as a whole for large-scale conquest and the political kudos that would doubtless come from military success made it virtually inevitable that sooner or later Caesar would be brought into contact with Britain. That close ties connected the two countries both politically and commercially must have become clear to him at an early stage, as he himself implies:

18. Caesar, *Gallic War*, II, 4

Among them (the Suessiones) even within our own living memory Diviciacus had been king, the most powerful in the whole of Gaul, and he had exercised control over a large part of these regions and also over Britain.

19. Caesar, *Gallic War*, III, 8

Of the whole seaboard in that region the Veneti exercise the most extensive sway, because they have very many vessels and in these they are accustomed to sail to Britain.

More importantly, however, Britain offered not only a safe haven for those unable to accept the growth of Roman influence:

20. Caesar, *Gallic War*, II, 14

Those who were the leaders of this plot fled to Britain because they saw how great a disaster they had brought upon the tribe (the Bellovaci).

but also the prospect of direct intervention in support of Gallic tribes who had their own reasons for suspecting and fearing a Roman move against Britain:

21. Strabo (1st C. BC–1st C. AD) IV, 4, 1

Of these (the maritime tribes of Belgic Gaul) the Veneti engaged Caesar in naval war. For they were concerned to prevent the crossing to Britain, since they were engaged in trade with it.

22. Caesar, *Gallic War*, III, 9

They (the Veneti) secured as their allies for the war the Osismi, Lexovii, Namnetes, Ambiliati, Morini, Diablintes and the Menapii. They also summoned help from Britain, which is situated opposite those regions.

Of the first invasion, the longest, most detailed and undoubtedly best account is that by Caesar himself, but as with all autobiographical material it is the account that Caesar himself chose to give rather than total unvarnished truth. As a result, we have to recognise that behind the veneer of apparent objectivity there lies a strong undercurrent of careful subjective censorship which is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the reasons he gives for embarking on the expedition in the first place.

23. Caesar, *Gallic War*, IV, 20–38

- 20 Though only a small part of summer was left and despite the fact that winter comes early in those districts – since the whole of Gaul faces north – Caesar nevertheless made active preparations for an expedition to Britain. He realised that in almost all our campaigns in Gaul help had been supplied to our enemies from that quarter, and even if the season left insufficient time for carrying out a campaign, he nevertheless thought it would be of great advantage to himself simply to visit the island, to observe the character of the natives, and get to know the lie of the land, the harbours and landing places.¹ Of all this the Gauls were pretty much ignorant, for no one, apart from traders, visits the place without good reason, and even they are acquainted with only the seaboard and those regions opposite Gaul. So, although traders were summoned to him from all around, he was unable to discover either the size of the island or the nature and strength of the tribes inhabiting it, their tactics in war, the customs they had or what harbours there were suitable for a sizeable number of large ships.
- 21 In order to obtain this information before risking the venture, he dispatched Gaius Volusenus, whom he considered suitable for the task, with a warship. He ordered him to carry out a thorough reconnaissance and to return to him

as soon as possible. Caesar himself set out with all his forces for the territory of the Morini, from which there was the shortest passage to Britain. Here he commanded ships to assemble from all the neighbouring districts as well as the fleet he had procured the previous summer for the war against the Veneti. In the meantime his plan had become known, and had been conveyed to the Britons by traders. As a result envoys came to him from numerous tribes in the island with promises of hostages and submission to the power of Rome. When Caesar had heard them, he made them generous promises, urged them to abide by their decision, and sent them home in the company of Commius, whom he had set up as king of the (Gallic) Atrebates following the conquest of that tribe. Commius' courage and judgement was valued by Caesar, who considered him to be loyal, while his influence was held to be of great account in those regions (i.e. Britain). He commanded Commius to approach what tribes he could, to urge them to place themselves under the protection of Rome, and to announce his imminent arrival there. Volusenus reconnoitred all the districts that opportunity allowed, bearing in mind that he did not dare disembark and entrust himself to the natives. On the fifth day he returned to Caesar and reported what he had observed.

- 22 While Caesar was waiting there to make ready his ships, envoys came to him from a large part of the Morini to apologise for their previous policy in making war on Rome, on the grounds that they were barbarians and ignorant of our ways, and they promised to do whatever Caesar ordered. He thought that this had occurred at quite a convenient moment since he did not wish to leave an enemy in his rear, and yet did not have the opportunity to embark on a campaign because of the time of year. Nor did he consider that dealing with these trivial matters should take precedence over Britain. He therefore ordered a large number of hostages from them, and when these were brought, accepted their submission. When about eighty transport vessels, which he thought were sufficient to carry across two legions, had been collected and assembled, he distributed what warships he had to his quartermaster, legates and auxiliary prefects. To these should be added eighteen transports which were held by the wind a distance of eight miles from there and prevented from reaching the same harbour (as the rest). These he allotted to the cavalry. The remainder of the army he entrusted to the legates Quintus Titurius Sabinus and Lucius Aurunculeius Cotta with instructions to march on the Menapii and those sections of the Morini that had not sent envoys to him. The legate Publius Sulpicius Rufus he ordered to hold the harbour with what he considered was an adequate garrison.
- 23 Having made these arrangements Caesar took advantage of fair sailing weather and cast off about the third watch (c. midnight). The cavalry he ordered to proceed to the further harbour, then to embark and to follow him. However, they carried out the task somewhat too slowly. Caesar himself reached Britain with the first ships about the fourth hour of the day (c. 9 a.m.), and there saw the enemy's forces lined up on all the hills. Such was the nature of the terrain at

this point and so precipitous the hills bordering the sea that a missile could be hurled from the cliff tops onto the beach. Thinking this a totally unsuitable place for disembarking, he waited at anchor until the ninth hour (c. 3 p.m.) for the other ships to arrive. In the meantime he summoned the legates and military tribunes and told them what he had learned from Volusenus, and what he wanted done. In addition, he warned them that military strategy, and in particular naval operations – subject as they were to rapid and unpredictable change – demanded that they carry out every move promptly at his slightest command. Having dismissed them, and taking advantage of a favourable wind and tide, he gave the signal, weighed anchor, and after moving on about seven miles from there, he ran his ships aground on an open and gradually shelving shore.

- 24 The natives, however, recognised the Romans' plan and sent ahead their cavalry and charioteers, a force they generally make use of in battle. The rest of the troops followed close behind and attempted to prevent our men from disembarking. As a result there were serious problems, since on account of their size the ships could not be run aground except in deep water, while the soldiers, in unknown terrain, with their hands full, and weighed down by the heavy and unwieldy burden of their arms, had to jump down from the ships and at the same time make a stand in the waves and engage the enemy. The enemy, in contrast, on dry land or advancing a short distance into the water, with all their limbs unencumbered and on very familiar ground, were boldly hurling javelins and spurring on their horses, trained (for this kind of operation). Our men were thoroughly alarmed by this state of affairs and wholly unaccustomed to this type of battle, and as a result did not apply the same vigour and energy they usually did in land battles.
- 25 When Caesar saw this, he ordered the warships, which were of more unfamiliar appearance to the natives and swifter and more manoeuvrable, to be moved a short distance away from the transports, then to be rowed hard and run aground on the enemy's unprotected flank from where the enemy should be repulsed and driven off by means of slings, arrows and artillery. This move was of great service to our men. Taken aback by the appearance of the ships, the motion of the oars and the unfamiliar type of artillery, the natives halted and withdrew, though only a short distance. Then, while our men still hesitated, mostly on account of the depth of the water, the standard-bearer of the X Legion, after a prayer to the gods that his act might turn out well for the legion, said, 'Jump down, soldiers, unless you want to betray the eagle to the enemy. I at least shall have performed my duty to my country and my general'. With this cry he leapt from the ship and began to carry the eagle towards the enemy. Then our troops, urging one another on not to incur such a disgrace, jumped en masse from the ship. When those on the next ships saw them, they likewise followed and advanced on the enemy.
- 26 The battle was hard fought on both sides. Since, however, our men could neither keep their ranks, nor get a firm footing, nor follow their own standards, and

soldiers from different ships attached themselves to whatever standard they came across, the result was general confusion. The enemy on the other hand knew all the shallows, and when they spotted from the shore soldiers disembarking one by one, they spurred on their horses and attacked them while they were having difficulties, surrounding them in force, while others hurled javelins at the exposed flank of entire groups. When Caesar saw this, he ordered the warships' longboats and likewise the scout-vessels to be filled with soldiers and these he despatched to help any men he saw in trouble. As soon as our men got a foothold on dry land and had the backing of all their comrades, they attacked the enemy and put them to flight, but could not pursue them any great distance because the cavalry had not been able to maintain their course and make the island. This one thing Caesar lacked to achieve his usual success.

- 27 Defeated in battle, as soon as the enemy had recovered from their flight, they immediately sent envoys to Caesar about peace. They promised to give hostages and to do whatever he ordered. Along with these envoys came Commius the Atrebate, whom I have indicated above had been sent on ahead to Britain by Caesar. He had been seized by the natives and thrown into chains on his arrival, while he was attempting to relay Caesar's commands in his capacity as an envoy. Now, after the battle, they sent him back. In their request for peace they put the blame for what had happened on the common people, and begged pardon for their ignorance. Caesar complained that though they had sought peace from him of their own accord by sending envoys to the continent, they had engaged in unprovoked war. However, he said he pardoned their ignorance and demanded hostages. Some of these they delivered straight away; the others they said they would hand over in a few days' time, once they had been summoned from more distant parts. In the meantime they ordered their people to return to the fields, and from all around chieftains began to assemble and to submit themselves and their tribes to Caesar.
- 28 By these means peace was established. On the fourth day after Caesar's arrival in Britain the eighteen ships which, as mentioned above, were carrying the cavalry set sail from the more northerly harbour before a gentle breeze. While they were approaching Britain and could be seen from the camp, so violent a storm suddenly arose that none of them could hold its course. Instead some were carried back to where they had started from; the others, at great peril to themselves, were swept westwards to the lower (southern) part of the island. However, when these put out anchors, they began to fill with water and as a result they were forced to ride out to sea in a night of bad weather and make for the continent.
- 29 That same night happened to coincide with a full moon, a time that usually produces the highest tides in the Ocean. Of this fact our men were ignorant. As a result the tide swamped the warships in which Caesar had arranged the passage of his army and which he had drawn up onto dry land. At the same

time the storm caused the transports, which were riding at anchor, to collide with one another. Our troops did not even have an opportunity to manage them or provide any assistance. Several ships were smashed to pieces; the rest, having lost their cables, anchors and other tackle, were unusable for sailing. This inevitably caused great consternation throughout the whole army, for there were no other ships on which the army could be transported back, and there was a total lack of materials for use in repairing the vessels. Moreover, since it was generally understood that they should winter in Gaul, no provision for grain had been made in Britain against the winter.

- 30 When the British chiefs who had come to Caesar after the battle realised this, they put their heads together. They were aware that the Romans lacked cavalry, ships and supplies, and gauged the meagre numbers of Caesar's troops from the small size of the camp, which was further diminished by the fact that he had brought his legions over without their heavy baggage. So they thought the best thing to do was to renew the conflict, deny our forces grain and other supplies and prolong operations into winter. They were confident that if the present invasion were overcome or prevented from returning, no one would thereafter cross over to Britain for the purpose of war. As a result they renewed their oaths of loyalty to one another and gradually began to slip away from the camp and secretly to gather in their forces from the fields.
- 31 Though Caesar was not yet aware of their plans, he nevertheless suspected what was coming, both as a result of the disaster that had befallen his ships and from the fact that the natives had ceased handing over hostages.² As a result he prepared measures for any eventuality. Each day he had corn brought into the camp from the fields, cannibalised the timber and bronze from those vessels that had suffered the worst damage so as to repair the others, and ordered any equipment of use in this respect to be brought over from the continent. In this way, by dint of strenuous efforts on the part of the soldiers in carrying out the task, he ensured that although twelve ships were a total write-off, the rest were made tolerably seaworthy.
- 32 While this was going on, one legion – as usual – had been sent out to harvest grain – the VII legion in fact. As yet no suspicion of hostilities had interrupted this process, since some of the natives were still in the fields, while others went back and forth to the camp. Then those on duty at the camp gates reported to Caesar that an unusually large dust cloud was visible in the direction the legion had gone. Caesar suspected the truth – that the natives had hatched a new plot – and ordered the cohorts on duty to set out with him in that direction, two of the other cohorts to replace them on duty, and the remainder to arm up and follow him at the double. Having advanced some little way from the camp he saw his men were being hard pressed by the enemy and only just holding their own, with the legion close-packed and being pelted with missiles from all sides. For since the corn had been harvested from all but one area, the enemy supposed our men would go to that

spot, and had lain in wait in the woods during the night. Then, when our men were scattered about and, having put down their arms, were engaged in harvesting, they suddenly attacked, killed a few, threw the rest, unable to regroup, into confusion, and at the same time surrounded them with cavalry and chariots.

- 33 Their method of chariot warfare is as follows. First they drive all over the field of battle hurling javelins and generally throw their enemy's ranks into confusion simply through the terror caused by the horses and the noise of the wheels. Whenever they penetrate between squadrons of cavalry, they jump down from their chariots and fight on foot.³ In the meantime the drivers retire a short distance from the battle and station the chariots in such a way that if the warriors are hard pressed by the enemy's numbers, they have a ready means of escape to their own lines. In this way they exhibit in battle the mobility of cavalry and the stability of infantry, and by daily training and practice they reach such a level of proficiency that they are able to control the horses at full gallop down steep inclines, check and turn them in a short space, and run along the chariot pole, stand on the yoke and get back to the chariot in a flash.
- 34 With our men thrown into confusion by these tactics, that is by the unexpected method of fighting, it was just in the nick of time that Caesar came to their assistance. For at his arrival the enemy halted and our forces recovered from their fear. Under the circumstances Caesar thought the moment unsuitable for attacking and engaging in a battle; so he kept his ground and after a short interval led the legions back into camp. While this was going on and all our forces were occupied, the natives who were still in the fields slipped away. There then followed several days of continuous stormy weather, which confined our men to camp and kept the enemy from attacking. In the meantime the natives sent messengers in all directions describing to their people the meagre numbers of our troops and pointing out what a splendid opportunity they had of getting booty and freeing themselves for ever if they drove the Romans from their camp. By this means they quickly assembled a large force of infantry and cavalry and moved on the camp.
- 35 Caesar foresaw what had happened in the course of the previous days would happen again: that even if the enemy were routed, their mobility would get them out of danger. However, having come into possession of about thirty horsemen, whom Commius the Atrebate, mentioned above, had brought over with him, Caesar drew up his legions in line of battle in front of the camp. Once battle was joined, the enemy were unable to withstand the attack of our forces for long and took to flight. Our men pursued them as far as their speed and endurance permitted, and killed a large number of them. They then set fire to all the buildings over a wide area and returned to camp.
- 36 That same day envoys from the enemy came to Caesar about peace. He demanded twice the number of hostages from them as before and ordered them to be brought to the continent, since with the approach of the equinox

he thought it better not to risk a passage with damaged ships in wintry weather. So, taking advantage of some good weather, he set sail shortly after midnight. All the ships reached the continent safely, though two transports could not make the same harbour as the rest and were carried a little further down the coast ...

- 38 ... Only two tribes in all sent hostages from Britain; the others failed to do so. For these achievements the Senate, on receipt of despatches from Caesar, decreed a public thanksgiving of twenty days.

More than 200 years later, Caesar's account was abridged as part of Dio Cassius' history of Rome, and though the account he gives adds little from a factual point of view, it does serve to put into perspective what in 55 BC was an almost incredible event.

24. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), XXXIX, 51–3

- 51 To this island (Britain), therefore, Caesar wished to cross, once he had won over the Morini, and the rest of Gaul was quiet. He made the crossing with his infantry by the best route, but he did not land where he should have. For the Britons, being forewarned of the invasion, occupied in advance all the landing places facing the continent. Caesar, therefore, sailed round a projecting headland and skirted along the coast on the other side of it. There he defeated those who joined battle with him as he disembarked in the shallows and secured a bridgehead before reinforcements could arrive. He then repulsed this attack too. Not many of the barbarians fell, however, since they consisted of charioteers and cavalry and easily escaped the Romans, whose own cavalry had not yet arrived. However, the natives were alarmed both by reports about the Romans that came over from the continent, and by the fact that they had dared to cross over at all and had been able to set foot on their territory. So they sent some of the Morini, who were friends of theirs, to Caesar in order to arrange peace.
- 52 At the time they were willing to give him the hostages he demanded, but when subsequently the Romans suffered damage both to the fleet they had with them and to the one on its way (from the continent) as the result of a storm, they changed their minds. While not attacking the Romans openly, since their camp was strongly guarded, they did seize a number of men who had been sent out as if into friendly territory to forage for provisions, and killed all but a few of them, the remainder being hastily rescued by Caesar. After this they even assaulted the Roman encampment itself, but they achieved nothing, and in fact came off badly. Even so, they would not come to terms until they had been defeated on a number of occasions. Indeed Caesar had no intention of making peace with them, but winter was coming on and he was supplied with insufficient forces for engaging in hostilities at

that time of year. Since too those forces being shipped over (from the continent) had been prevented from arriving and the Gauls had risen in his absence, he reluctantly entered into a treaty with the Britons, demanding many hostages on this occasion also, though he received only a few.

- 53 Thus, he sailed back to the continent and ended the disturbances. For himself or the state he had gained nothing from Britain except the glory of having led an expedition against it. Indeed he himself took great pride in this, and the Romans at home made great play of it. For seeing what was previously unknown had been revealed to sight, and what had formerly been unheard-of had become accessible to them, they regarded future expectations arising from these events as already realised, and gloried in all the gains they expected to achieve as if they already had them in their possession. On account of this they voted to hold a festival of thanksgiving for twenty days.

A similar toning-down of the acclaim that greeted Caesar's first invasion is also evident in Tacitus' work on his father-in-law, though in this case the motive behind the estimate is not without a personal aspect:

25. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Agricola*, 13

The deified Julius (Caesar) was indeed the first Roman to enter Britain with an army, but though he intimidated the inhabitants by a victory and gained control of the coast, it is clear he merely pointed it out to those who came after him; he did not bequeath it to them.

The invasion of 54 BC

Once again we are dependent for a detailed account of the invasion upon Caesar's own commentaries, to which Dio Cassius' abridgement adds little extra:

26. Caesar, *Gallic War*, V, 1–23

- 1 In the consulship of Lucius Domitianus and Appius Claudius, just before Caesar left his winter quarters to go into Italy – his usual practice every year – he ordered the legates he had placed in command of the legions to see to the construction of as many ships as possible during the winter, and to have the old ones repaired. He specified their size and shape. For speed of loading and for the purpose of beaching he had them made of shallower draft than those we normally employ in the Mediterranean, the more so since he had discovered that the waves in the Channel were smaller owing to the frequent changes in the tide. For the transportation of cargo and the large number of draught animals he had them made a little wider than those we employ on other seas. All these he ordered to be equipped with sails and

oars, something their lower freeboard greatly facilitated. The tackle needed for fitting out the ships he ordered to be brought from Spain ...

(From Italy Caesar then set out for Illyria, where there was fresh trouble, before returning to Italy and then Gaul.)

- 2 When these matters had been concluded and the assizes completed, Caesar returned to Cisalpine Gaul, and from there he set out for the army. On his arrival he toured all the winter camps and found that as a result of outstanding efforts on the part of the troops, and despite a serious shortage of material, about 600 vessels of the type described above and twenty-eight warships had been fitted out and were ready for launching in a few days. Caesar praised the soldiers and those who had been in charge of the task, indicated what he wanted done and ordered all the vessels to be assembled at Boulogne, from where he knew was the most convenient crossing to Britain – a passage of about thirty miles from the continent ...⁴

(Caesar then advanced to deal with the Treveri, who had failed to carry out instructions.)

- 5 When these matters had been settled, Caesar proceeded to Boulogne with the legions. There he learned that sixty ships which had been built in the territory of the Meldi had been unable to hold their course because of the weather, which had driven them back, and they had returned to their starting point. The rest, he discovered, were fully fitted out and ready for sailing. Four thousand cavalry from the whole of Gaul assembled at this same point together with the chieftains from all the tribes ...

(It was Caesar's intention to take the majority of these with him to Britain in order to prevent them from causing trouble in his absence. One of them, however, Dumnorix of the Aedui, of whom Caesar was particularly suspicious, was loath to leave Gaul and spread the rumour that once in Britain Caesar intended their murder. When, after a delay, came favourable weather, Dumnorix took advantage of Roman preparations for embarkation to slip out of Caesar's camp, but he was intercepted and upon resisting was killed.)

- 8 This done, Labienus was left on the continent with three legions and two thousand cavalry to hold the harbours, provide a corn supply, keep an eye on events in Gaul and make plans as time and circumstance demanded. Caesar himself with five legions and a contingent of cavalry equal to what he left on the continent weighed anchor towards sunset and advanced with a light south-westerly wind. About midnight, however, the wind dropped and he could not hold his course; he was carried too far by the tide and at dawn saw Britain left behind on the port side. Then, once again he took advantage

of the turn of the tide and rowed hard to reach that part of the island where the previous summer he had discovered the best landing place. In this the spirit of the soldiers was particularly praiseworthy; for despite being in heavily laden transports they kept up with the warships through their unremitting efforts in rowing. The whole fleet reached Britain about mid-day, but no enemy were seen there. As Caesar later learned from prisoners, large contingents had gathered at that spot, but they had been alarmed by the number of ships. Including those of the previous year and private vessels which individuals had built for their own use, over 800 were visible at one and the same time. As a result they had withdrawn from the shore and hidden themselves on higher ground.

- 9 Caesar disembarked his army and occupied a suitable spot for a camp. Once he had learned from prisoners where the enemy's forces had taken up their position, he left ten cohorts and 300 cavalry on the coast to guard the fleet and about the third watch (c. midnight) went after the enemy, feeling little anxiety for the ships since he was leaving them lying at anchor on a sandy and open shore.⁵ He placed Quintus Atrius in charge of the troops guarding the fleet. After a night march of about twelve miles Caesar came within sight of the enemy's force. They for their part advanced with their cavalry and chariots to a river and began to block our advance and to join battle from higher ground. Repulsed by the cavalry, they hid themselves in the woods and occupied a position well protected by both nature and the hand of man, a position, so it seemed, they had previously prepared for inter-tribal warfare since all the entrances were barred by many felled trees. The enemy made sorties from the woods in scattered groups and sought to prevent our men from penetrating their defences. However, troops of the VII legion locked shields and making a ramp against their fortifications took the place and drove the enemy from the woods at a cost of only a few men wounded. Caesar, however, forbade his men to pursue the fugitives too far, both because he was unsure of the terrain and because with the day almost over he wanted time left for fortifying a camp.
- 10 The following morning Caesar sent out three columns of infantry and cavalry to pursue the fugitives. They had advanced some distance and only the rearguard was in sight when despatch riders came to Caesar from Quintus Atrius with the news that the night before a great storm had blown up and that nearly all the ships had suffered damage and had been thrown up onto the shore. Neither the anchors nor the cables had held, nor had the sailors and helmsmen been able to withstand the force of the storm. As a result serious damage had been sustained through ships colliding.
- 11 When he learned this, Caesar ordered the legions and cavalry to halt their advance and be recalled. He himself returned to the ships where his own eyes confirmed pretty much what he had learned from the messengers and despatches: that around forty ships were a write-off; the rest nevertheless seemed capable of being repaired at the cost of considerable effort.

Accordingly, he gathered the skilled craftsmen from the legions and ordered that others be summoned from the continent. He wrote to Labienus with instructions to build as many ships as he could with the troops at his disposal. Caesar himself decided the best course would be to have all the ships hauled out of the water and linked to the camp in a single fortification, though it was a task involving considerable effort and labour. He spent about ten days carrying this out, not stopping the soldiers' work even at night. Once the ships were beached and the camp well fortified, he left the same units as before to guard the ships, while he himself set out to the position from which he had withdrawn. On his arrival there he found greater forces of the Britons had now assembled there from all sides, and that by common consent supreme command and conduct of the war had been vested in Cassivellaunus, whose territory was separated from the coastal tribes by a river called the Thames, some eighty miles from the Channel. Previously he had been involved in continuous warfare with the other tribes, but our arrival had prompted the Britons to appoint him commander-in-chief.

12–14 (The Geography and People of Britain: see §7, 12, 13.)

15 The enemy's cavalry and charioteers engaged in fierce fighting with our cavalry on the march, though our men proved superior in every respect and drove them into the woods and hills, killing several, though also suffering a number of casualties through being too eager in the pursuit. After a time, however, while our men were off their guard and engaged in fortifying the camp, the Britons suddenly dashed out of the woods, and launching an attack against those on outpost-duty in front of the camp engaged in a fierce battle. Caesar sent two cohorts to the rescue – the first cohorts of their respective legions at that – but though these took up their position with only a narrow gap between them, our men were disconcerted by the unusual tactics and the Britons with great audacity broke through between them and withdrew from the field of battle unscathed. That day Quintus Laberius Durus, a military tribune, was killed. The Britons for their part were driven off when further cohorts were sent into action.

16 It was clear throughout the whole of this type of combat, fought as it was in front of the camp and in full view of everyone, that our men were ill-matched with an enemy of this kind on account of their heavy armament, since they could neither pursue them when they retreated, nor dared become separated from their standards. The cavalry too for their part engaged in combat at great risk, especially since the enemy very often deliberately retreated, and then, when they had drawn our forces some distance from the legions, would jump down from their chariots and fight on foot, much to our disadvantage. In fact the British cavalry tactics posed an identical threat to our men whether they were retreating or pursuing. Added to this was the fact that they never fought in close formation but rather in small bands widely spaced, and had reserves stationed at intervals so that contingents covered one another, with fresh troops taking the place of those who were tired.

- 17 The following day the enemy took up position on the hills at some distance from the camp and began to show themselves in small groups and to harass our cavalry with less vigour than the day before. At about noon, however, when Caesar had sent three legions and all the cavalry foraging under the command of the legate Gaius Tribonius, the Britons suddenly swooped down on the foraging parties from all directions and even engaged the legions in their battle formation. Our forces repelled them with a fierce counter-attack and did not break off the pursuit until the cavalry, seeing the legions behind them and relying on their support, sent the enemy flying. A great many of them were killed; the rest were given no opportunity to rally, stand their ground or jump down from their chariots. As a result of this rout, the forces that had flocked from near and far to help the British cause immediately evaporated; thereafter the enemy never engaged us with their full strength.
- 18 Discovering their plans Caesar led his army to the river Thames and the territory of Cassivellaunus. This river can be crossed on foot only at one point, and even then with difficulty. On his arrival there, Caesar saw that large enemy forces were drawn up on the opposite bank, which was itself defended by sharp stakes planted along its edge, while similar ones, driven in below water-level, were concealed by the river. When Caesar learned this from prisoners and deserters, he sent the cavalry on ahead and ordered the legions to follow without delay. However, the infantry moved with such speed and energy, though they had only their heads above water, that the enemy were unable to withstand the attack of both the legions and the cavalry; instead they abandoned the banks and fled.
- 19 Cassivellaunus, mentioned above, gave up all hope of a pitched battle and dismissed the greater part of his forces. Retaining, however, some 4,000 charioteers, he began keeping our line of march under observation. He would withdraw a short distance from the route and hide in impenetrable wooded areas. Whenever he discovered the line of our intended advance, he drove the inhabitants and cattle in that area from the fields into the woods, and when our cavalry made incautious sorties into open country in order to plunder and ravage the land, he would send his chariots out of the woods by every lane and pathway, placing our cavalry in great danger in the ensuing engagements. Through fear of this indeed he prevented them from ranging too far afield. The only course left open to Caesar was to keep the cavalry in contact with the infantry column and to inflict as much damage on the enemy by devastating the fields and burning as could be achieved commensurate with the infantry's endurance in marching.⁶
- 20 In the meantime the Trinovantes, who were about the strongest tribe in that region, sent envoys to Caesar. It was from that tribe that the young Mandubracius had come to Caesar in nearby Gaul seeking his protection, having fled for his life when his father, who had been king of the tribe, had been killed by Cassivellaunus. They promised their submission and that they would carry out Caesar's orders, and asked him to defend Mandubracius from

harm at the hands of Cassivellaunus, and to send him back to his tribe in order to rule them as their king. Caesar demanded forty hostages from them and grain for his army, and sent Mandubracius to them. The Trinovantes for their part quickly carried out the orders and sent the required number of hostages and grain.

- 21 With the Trinovantes under Roman protection and spared from any injury at Roman hands, the Cenimagni, Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci and Cassi sent delegations and submitted to Caesar. From them he learned that Cassivellaunus' stronghold was not far away, that it was protected by woods and marshes, and that quite a large number of men and cattle had been brought together there. By 'stronghold' the Britons mean a densely wooded location which they have fortified with a rampart and ditch and in which they are accustomed to gather in order to escape an enemy attack. Caesar made for the place with his legions and found it well protected by both nature and the hand of man. Nevertheless he proceeded to assault it on two sides. After a short resistance, the enemy were unable to withstand the attack of our forces and poured out of the stronghold on another side. A great quantity of cattle was found there, and many of the enemy were intercepted as they fled and were killed.
- 22 While this was going on there, Cassivellaunus sent messengers to Kent, a region which, as mentioned above, is situated by the sea and is an area ruled over by four kings: Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagulus and Segovax. These he ordered to gather all their forces and to make a surprise assault and attack on the naval camp. When these came to the camp, our forces made a sortie, killed many of them, captured Lugotorix, a high-ranking leader, and returned without loss. Upon news of this engagement Cassivellaunus, faced with so many reverses, with his territory devastated, and alarmed most of all by the defection of allied tribes, sent envoys to Caesar about surrender, using Commius the Atrebate as a go-between.⁷ Caesar had decided to winter on the continent in view of sudden unrest in Gaul. Besides, there was not much left of the summer, and he was well aware that this situation could be easily dragged out. He therefore ordered hostages and stipulated the tribute Britain should pay Rome each year. In addition he strictly forbade Cassivellaunus to harm Mandubracius or the Trinovantes.
- 23 On delivery of the hostages, Caesar led his army back to the coast and found the ships repaired. When these had been launched, he decided to transport the army back in two trips both because of the large number of prisoners he had and because some of the ships had been destroyed in the storm. Yet it so happened that out of so large a number of vessels and despite so many voyages not a single ship carrying troops was lost either this year or the previous one. However, of those ships which were sent over to him empty from the continent – both those that had taken part in the earlier troop landings and those sixty which Labienus had later had built – very few reached their destination; almost all the rest were forced back to the continent. After waiting a considerable time in vain for them and so as not to be prevented

from sailing by the season, since the equinox was coming on, Caesar was obliged to pack his men in more tightly. There ensued a dead calm, and setting off at the beginning of the second watch (late evening) he made landfall at dawn and brought all his ships back safely.

27. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), XL, 1–4

- 1 Among Caesar's other undertakings in Gaul during the consulship of those same men, Lucius Domitius and Appius Claudius, he had built ships that were halfway between his own swift vessels and the local cargoboats. This was so they might combine as far as possible lightness of construction and the ability to withstand the waves, and also so that they would not come to any harm when left high and dry. Once the weather was fit for sailing, Caesar again crossed over to Britain, giving as his excuse the fact that they had not sent him all the hostages they had promised. They evidently thought that because Caesar had withdrawn from Britain empty-handed on one occasion, he would not trouble them again. In fact, however, he coveted the island greatly so that he would certainly have found another excuse if he had not had this one. So he landed at the same place as before and because of the number of his ships and the fact that they put into the shore at many points simultaneously, no one dared to oppose him. Immediately, therefore, Caesar was able to consolidate his beachhead.
- 2 For this reason the barbarians were unable to prevent his invasion, and because Caesar's arrival with a larger army caused them even greater alarm than had been the case the previous occasion, they gathered together all their most valued possessions into the densest and most thickly overgrown parts of the surrounding countryside. Once they had made them secure by cutting down the trees round about and piling more on top of them row after row so that the end result was a kind of stockade, they then began to harass the Roman foraging parties. Indeed, after being defeated in a battle on open ground, they drew the Romans in pursuit towards their stockade and killed a number in turn. After this a storm once again damaged the Roman ships and the Britons sent for allies and moved against the fleet with Cassivellaunus, the foremost of the island's chieftains, as their leader. On engaging them, the Romans were at first thrown into confusion by the onslaught of the British chariots, but then they opened their ranks, and allowing the chariots to pass through, hurled their weapons at the enemy from the side as they rushed past. In this way they made the battle equal.
- 3 For a while both sides stood their ground, but then, though the barbarians gained the upper hand over the Roman infantry, they were routed by the Roman cavalry and withdrew to the Thames, where they camped after blocking the crossing point there by means of stakes both above and below the water line. Caesar, however, forced them to abandon this stockade with a vigorous attack, and later, by means of a siege, drove them out of their

stronghold, while others beat off an attack on the naval camp. As a result the Britons became very much alarmed; they ended hostilities, provided hostages, and agreed to pay a yearly tribute.

- 4 Thus did Caesar depart from the island for good, leaving no troops behind in it; for he believed that such a force would be in danger if it passed the winter in a foreign land, and that it would not be advisable for himself to be absent from Gaul any longer. He contented himself with his present achievements for fear that in striving after greater ones he should be deprived of even these. And it seemed that he was right in this, as was proved in the event.

It is worth noting that in all the accounts of the conflicts given there is nowhere any mention of the hackneyed but fallacious belief that the Britons attached scythe-blades to the axles of their chariots – a Persian practice. This silence is given additional backing by both archaeology and the very tactics employed by the Britons in using chariots for warfare (cf. *Gallic War*, IV, 33 and V, 16). The idea of British scythed chariots seems in fact to originate with Pomponius Mela (first century AD):

28. *De chorographia*, III, 6, 52

The Britons engage in combat not only on horseback and on foot, but also with two-horse chariots and vehicles equipped in the Gallic fashion. Those they use with scythed axles they call *covinni*.⁸

While the invasion of 55 had been motivated largely by political and military considerations, the presence of numerous private vessels as part of the 54 BC flotilla (Caesar, *Gallic War*, V, 8) suggests that on this occasion the prospect of loot had exerted its influence. This is further borne out by a number of letters written that year by Cicero to his friend Trebatius and brother Quintus, who accompanied the venture, and to other friends concerning events in Britain. In this he provides an interesting second-party picture of how the expedition was being regarded by one individual near the centre of Roman public life:

29. Cicero, *Ad familiares* (*Letters to his Friends*) VII, 6, 2 = Shackleton Bailey, 27, 2 (to Trebatius, May 54)

Take care you aren't cheated by the charioteers in Britain.

30. Cicero, *Ad familiares* (*Letters to his Friends*) VII, 7, 1 = Shackleton Bailey, 28, 1 (to Trebatius, June 54)

I hear there's no gold or silver in Britain. If this is so, I advise you to get a war-chariot and hasten back to us as soon as possible.

**31. Cicero, *Ad Atticum* (*Letters to Atticus*) IV, 16, 7 =
Shackleton Bailey, 89, 7 (early July 54)**

The outcome of the war in Britain is eagerly awaited; for it is well known that the approaches to the island are set round with walls of wondrous mass. It has also become clear that there isn't an ounce of silver in the island, nor any prospect of booty except slaves. I don't suppose you're expecting any of them to be accomplished in literature or music!

**32. Cicero, *Ad Atticum* (*Letters to Atticus*) IV, 15, 10
= Shackleton Bailey, 90, 10 (late July 54)**

A letter from my brother Quintus leads me to believe he is now in Britain. I am waiting in suspense to learn what he is doing.

**33. Cicero, *Ad fratrem* (*Letters to his Brother*) III, 1,
10 (late August 54)**

On affairs in Britain I see from your letter there is nothing there for us to fear or rejoice at.⁹

**34. Cicero, *Ad Atticum* (*Letters to Atticus*) IV, 18, 5 =
Shackleton Bailey, 92, 5 (late October–early
November 54)**

On the 24th of October I received letters from my brother Quintus and from Caesar which were sent from the nearest point on the shores of Britain on September 25th. The campaign there is complete; hostages have been received; there is no booty; tribute has, however, been imposed and they are bringing back the army from Britain.¹⁰

In the great Gallic uprising that eventually followed Caesar's return from the second invasion of Britain Commius the Atrebate, who had given the Romans signal service in both expeditions, took sides with his fellow countrymen, and when eventually defeated made good his escape to Britain. There he ostensibly founded a dynasty among the British Atrebates which was to last until the time of Claudius:

**35. Caesar, *Gallic War*, VII, 75, 76, 79; VIII, 6, 7, 10,
21, 23, 47, 48**

36. Frontinus (1st C. AD), *Stratagems* II, 13, 11

When Commius the Atrebate was defeated by Caesar and was fleeing from Gaul to Britain, he chanced to arrive at Ocean (English Channel) when the wind

was favourable but the tide on the ebb. Though his ships were stuck on the exposed shore, he nevertheless ordered the sails to be spread. When in his pursuit of Commius Caesar saw them from a distance billowing and swelling in the breeze, he thought that Commius was making a successful getaway and turned back.

CAESAR TO CLAUDIUS

With the outbreak of civil war in 49 BC, followed by further conflicts after the death of Caesar in 44 BC, Britain disappears from Roman records for nearly two decades. That contact on a commercial level continued we cannot doubt, but while diplomatic links may have faded for a time, there were still tribes who had a vested interest in maintaining ties, if only as a means of counteracting the expansionist tendencies of their neighbours. Such contacts do indeed begin to appear again once Augustus was in power:

37. Strabo (1st C. BC–1st C. AD), IV, 5, 3

At present, however, some of the chieftains there, having gained the friendship of Caesar Augustus through embassies and paying court to him, have set up votive offerings on the Capitolium and have almost made the whole island Roman property. In addition, they submit so readily to heavy duties both on the exports from there to Gaul and on the imports from Gaul – these consist of ivory chains, necklaces, amber, glassware and other such trinkets – that there is no need to garrison the island. For at the very least one legion and some cavalry would be needed to exact tribute from them, and the expense of the army would equal the money brought in. Indeed the duties would have to be reduced if tribute were imposed and at the same time there are dangers to be faced if force is applied.

What is significant, however, is that while Rome recognised that such links had certain financial advantages, it did not see any need for a costly takeover of the island, so long as Britain posed no threat to the empire:

38. Strabo, II, 5, 8

As for governmental purposes there would be nothing to gain from knowledge of such places (i.e. north of Britain) or their inhabitants, especially if they live on islands that can neither injure nor benefit us because of their isolation. For

though the Romans could have held Britain, they rejected the idea, seeing there was nothing to fear from the Britons, since they are not powerful enough to cross over and attack us, nor was there much advantage to be gained if the Romans were to occupy it. For it seems that at the moment more revenue is gained from the customs duties than tribute could bring in, if one deducts the expense of the forces needed to garrison the place and levy the tribute.

Despite Strabo's optimistic description of Roman influence in Britain, there does not appear to have been a total absence of friction, and evidence, late it is true, suggests the need at times for Augustus to rattle the Roman sabre to maintain the status quo:

39. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), XLIX, 38, 2 (34 BC)

Augustus had set out to lead an expedition into Britain in emulation of his father (Julius Caesar – by adoption), and had already advanced into Gaul after the winter which saw the consulships of Antony for the second time and of Lucius Libo, when some newly conquered tribes together with the Dalmatians rose in revolt.

40. Dio Cassius, LIII, 22, 5 (27 BC)

He also set out with the intention of leading an expedition into Britain, but on his arrival in Gaul he stayed there. For it seemed likely that the Britons would come to terms with him, and affairs in Gaul were still unsettled since the civil wars had broken out immediately after their subjugation.

41. Dio Cassius, LIII, 25, 2 (26 BC)

Augustus was anxious for war against Britain since the people there would not come to terms, but he was prevented by a revolt of the Salassi, and the Cantabrians and Asturians had become hostile.

On a lower level, the diplomatic pressure was maintained through the public expectation of an eventual Roman takeover voiced in the poetry of the day:¹

**42. [Tibullus] III, 7 = IV, 1, 147–50 (pre-27 BC)
(addressed to Augustus' general Messalla)**

Where Ocean with its waves surrounds the world no land will meet you with opposing arms. For you remains the Briton, by Roman force yet undefeated, for you the world's other half beyond the path of sun.

43. Propertius, II, 27, 5f. (c. 27 BC)

Whether on foot the Parthian we pursue or the Briton with our fleet, blind are the perils of sea and land.

44. Horace, *Odes*, III, 5, 1–4 (c. 27 BC)

That Jupiter the thunderer reigns in heaven has ever been our creed; Augustus shall be held a god on earth when once the Britons and the grievous Parthians are added to our empire.

45. Horace, *Odes*, I, 35, 29f. (c. 26 BC)

May you (the goddess Fortune) preserve our Caesar soon to go against the Britons, furthest of earth's peoples.

46. Horace, *Odes* I, 21, 13–16 (pre-23 BC)²

Moved by your prayer he (Apollo) shall take from our people and their leader Caesar tear-inspiring war and plague and wretched famine and inflict them on the Persians and the Britons.

Until such time, Rome clearly preferred to acquiesce in minor shifts of power in Britain so long as these did not radically alter the balance of power there. A passing reference in Horace, *Odes*, IV, 14, 47–8 (c. 15 BC) may indicate a transitory renewal of Roman interest:³

47. Horace, *Odes* IV, 14, 47–8

To you monster-filled Ocean that roars around Britain pays heed.

For the most part, however, the door was open to receive friendly kings expelled from their lands by what were often little more than palace coups:

48. Augustus (early 1st C. AD), *Res gestae* (*Achievements*), 32

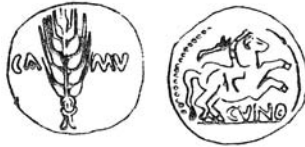
The following kings sought refuge with me as suppliants: Tiridates of Parthia (29 BC), and later Phrates, son of King Phrates (c. 25 BC), Artavasdes of Media (after Actium), Artaxares of Adiabene, Dubnobellaunus and Tin[comarus] from Britain, Maelo of the Sugambri ...

Within Britain itself, literary evidence for such power struggles within and between tribes is altogether lacking, but coinage may suggest something of events and propaganda struggles.⁴ Thus, coins of the Catuvellaunian king Tasciovanus and his successor Cunobelinus bearing the mint-mark of Camulodunum, capital of the Trinovantes, indicate a resumption of expansion that Caesar's intervention and restoration of Mandubracius had temporarily halted:

49. Gold coin of Tasciovanus (Van Arsdell, 1684–1)



50. Gold coin of Cunobelinus (Van Arsdell, 1931)



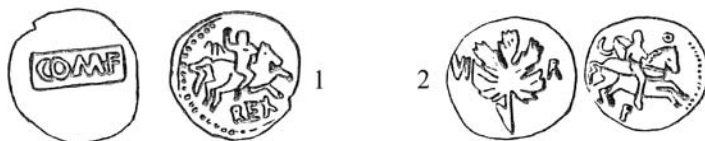
Similar expansion southwards into the northern sectors of Atrebate territory evidently took place under Eppaticcus, apparently a brother of Cunobelinus:

51. Gold coin of Eppaticcus (Van Arsdell, 575–1)



Was it to counter such pressure that coins of Eppillus, who had supplanted Tincomarus, and his own successor Verica, bear the title REX, perhaps as a token of Roman recognition, together with the vine-leaf motif in Verica's case?

52. Gold coins of Verica (Van Arsdell, 500–1, 520–1)



Despite the changes, however, the early years of Tiberius' reign show relations in general between Rome and Britain to have been sufficiently good to allow the return of survivors from a shipwreck on the British coast in AD 16:

53. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Annals*, II, 24

Some men had been carried to Britain and were returned by its chieftains.

While the period of Tiberius' reign (AD 14–37) saw relations between Rome and Britain frozen into terms of mutual non-interference, the accession of Gaius Caligula brought a radical, if transitory, renewal of interest. The expulsion from the island of Adminius and his 'surrender' to Gaius, engaged at the time in the farce of a German expedition, was to lead to the infamous seashell incident that was the only apparent achievement of the Emperor's proposed British campaign of AD 40. What events can be held to account for our sources' narrative of the incident we cannot tell. Was it simply a manifestation of imperial insanity, or a shrewd attempt to humiliate troops who refused to embark for action in a land still regarded with awe, suspicion and fear?

54. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Caligula*, 44, 46

44 On reaching the camp, Caligula dismissed in disgrace the legates who were late in assembling auxiliary units from various places so as to demonstrate that he was a rigorous and strict leader. In his review of the troops he deprived many of the chief centurions of their rank, men who were by now getting on in years and in some cases had just a few days to go before they were due for discharge. This he did on the pretext of their age and infirmity. The rest he railed at for their greed and reduced their retirement bonus to 6,000 sesterces.⁵ All that he accomplished was to receive the surrender of Adminius, a son of Cunobelinus, King of the Britons, who had been banished by his father and had gone over to the Romans with a few followers. Yet, as if the whole island had been handed over, he sent a pompous letter to Rome and ordered the couriers to drive their vehicles right into the Forum and up to the Senate House and not to hand it over to

the consuls except in the Temple of Mars and before a full meeting of the Senate.

- 46 Finally, as if to bring the campaign to a close, he drew up his battleline on the shore of Ocean and moved his ballistas and other artillery into position. Then, with no one knowing or able to guess what he was about, he suddenly ordered them to gather shells and fill their helmets and the folds of their tunics with them, calling them spoils from Ocean owed to the Capitol and Palatine. As a monument to his victory he erected a very high tower from which fires were to shine at night to guide the passage of ships, just like the Pharos (at Alexandria). He also announced to the soldiers a bonus of 100 denarii per man, as if he had shown unprecedented generosity, and said ‘Go on your way happy; go on your way rich.’

55. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), LIX, 25, 1–3

On his arrival at Ocean, as if he were going to conduct a campaign in Britain, he drew up all his soldiers on the shore. Then he embarked on a trireme, and after putting out a little from the land, sailed back again. After this he took his seat on a high platform, gave the soldiers a signal as if for battle, and urged them on by means of the trumpeters. Then suddenly he ordered them to gather seashells, and having got these spoils – for it was clear he needed booty for his triumphal procession – he became very excited, as though he had enslaved Ocean itself, and gave his soldiers many presents. The shells he carried off to Rome in order to exhibit his booty there as well.

THE CLAUDIAN INVASION

The official version inscribed on the arch of Claudius dedicated in Rome AD 51:

56. *Britannia* 22 (1991), p. 12 (restored)

To Tiberius Clau[dius Cae]sar Augu[stus Germani]cus, [son of Drusus], Pontifex [Maximus] (High Priest), in the 11th year [of his holding Tribuni-
cian Pow]er (AD 51), 5 times Consul, [22 times saluted] Imperator, [Censor,
Father of his Co]untry, the Senate and Ro[man] Pe[ople] (dedicate this arch)
because [he received the surrender of] 11 British kings, [defeated without]
any reverse, and was the first [to bring] b[arbarian] tribes [beyond Ocean
under Roman] sway.

Behind this ostensibly bald statement of triumph, however, we find in the period before the invasion itself a combination of both worsening relations between Britain and Rome and a personal need on the part of Claudius to prove himself worthy of serious consideration as emperor:

57. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Claudius*, 17

He undertook but a single campaign, and a minor one at that. The Senate voted him the triumphal ornaments for it, but he considered the honour beneath his dignity as emperor and wanted the glory of a proper triumph. So, as the best place for gaining this he chose Britain, which no one had attempted to invade since the deified Julius, and which was in uproar at the time as a result of the Roman refusal to return certain fugitives.

58. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), LX, 19, 1

At the same time as these events were happening in the City Aulus Plautius, a senator of great distinction, led a campaign to Britain, since a certain Berikos

(Verica), who had been driven out of the island as a result of an uprising, had persuaded Claudius to send a force there.

Nor was the expedition itself without incident, and at one stage, the prospect of a refusal on the part of the troops may have raised momentarily the spectre of another Caligulan fiasco. In the event, the not-inconsiderable delay was to prove a positive advantage in the initial stages of conquest:

59. Dio Cassius, LX, 19–22

- 19 So it was that Plautius undertook the expedition, though he had difficulty in getting his army to leave Gaul, since the troops were indignant at the prospect of campaigning outside the known world and would not obey him until Narcissus, who had been sent by Claudius, mounted Plautius' tribunal and tried to harangue them. Thereupon they became even more angry and refused to allow him to speak at all, but suddenly all in unison they raised the cry 'Io Saturnalia' – at the festival of Saturn the slaves take over the role of their masters and engage in festivities – and at once they willingly followed Plautius.¹ These events did, however, delay the departure. They made the crossing in three divisions so as not to be hampered in landing, as a single force might be. On their way across, however, they were at first disheartened by being driven back in their course. Subsequently, though, they recovered their spirits when a bolt of lightning shot from east to west – the direction they were sailing. On putting in to the island they met with no resistance, since the Britons, from what they had learned, had not expected them to come and had not assembled beforehand. Even when they did assemble they did not engage the Romans but took refuge in the marshes and woods hoping to wear them out by these tactics, so that they would sail back empty-handed, as had happened in Julius Caesar's day.
- 20 Plautius, therefore, had a good deal of trouble in searching them out, and when he did eventually locate them, he defeated first Caratacus and then Togodumnus, the sons of Cunobelinus, who was now dead. The Britons were not in fact independent, but ruled over by various kings. With these two put to flight Plautius secured the surrender on terms of part of the Bodunni (Dobunni) tribe who were subject to the Catuvellauni. Leaving a garrison there he advanced further and came to a river. The barbarians thought the Romans would not be able to cross this without a bridge, and as a result had pitched camp in a rather careless fashion on the opposite bank. Plautius, however, sent across some Celts who were practised in swimming with ease fully armed across even the fastest of rivers. These fell unexpectedly on the enemy, but rather than attacking the men they maimed the horses that drew their chariots instead. In the resultant confusion not even the mounted warriors could get away unscathed. Plautius then sent across Flavius Vespasian,

who subsequently became Emperor, and his brother Sabinus, who was serving under him. They too managed to get across the river and killed some of the enemy, since they were not expecting them. Those Britons who survived did not, however, take to flight, but rather joined battle with them again the following day. The struggle was indecisive until Gnaeus Hosidius Geta, after narrowly escaping capture, defeated the enemy so resoundingly that he was awarded triumphal ornaments² even though he had not yet held the consulship. From there the Britons withdrew to the Thames, at a point where it flows into the sea and at high tide forms a lake. This they crossed with ease since they knew precisely where the ground was firm and the way passable. The Romans, however, in pursuing them, got into difficulties here. Once again the Celts swam across, while others crossed by a bridge a little way upstream, and they engaged the enemy from several sides at once, cutting many of them down. However, in pursuing the survivors without due precaution they got into marshes from which it was difficult to find a way out and lost a number of men.

- 21 On account of this and the fact that the death of Togodumnus, far from causing the Britons to give in, had united them all the more to avenge him, Plautius became afraid and advanced no further. Instead, he hung on to what was already in his possession and sent for Claudius. He had in fact been instructed to do this in the event of any strong opposition, and a good deal of equipment, including elephants, had already been assembled for this campaign. When the report reached Claudius, he handed over affairs at home to his colleague Lucius Vitellius (father of the future emperor), whom he had obliged to remain consul like himself for the full half year, and went off on campaign. After sailing downriver to Ostia, he was then conveyed along the coast to Massilia. From there he travelled partly overland and partly along the rivers and on his arrival at Ocean, he crossed over to Britain and joined the army, which was waiting for him at the Thames.³ Taking over command, he crossed the river and, engaging the natives who had gathered at his approach, defeated them and took Camulodunum (Colchester), the capital of Cunobelinus. As a result of this he won over numerous tribes, some on terms of surrender, others by force, and was saluted Imperator on several occasions – contrary to precedent; for no one may receive this title more than once for the same war. In addition he disarmed the Britons and handed them over to Plautius, whom he authorised to subjugate the remaining areas.⁴ Claudius himself hastened back to Rome, sending the news of his victory on ahead by means of his sons-in-law, Magnus and Silanus.
- 22 When the Senate learned of these achievements, it awarded Claudius the title Britannicus and gave him permission to celebrate a triumph. They also voted to hold an annual festival and to erect two triumphal arches, one in Rome, the other in Gaul, from where he had put to sea when he crossed to Britain. They also bestowed on his son the same title, with the result that

Britannicus came in a way to be the boy's actual name, and they granted Messalina the privilege that Livia had had of sitting in the front seat at the theatre and the use of the carriage.⁵

On one point of the expedition Dio Cassius' account differs from that of Suetonius – the actual degree of Claudius' involvement in military operations. On this too depends the decision whether Plautius' sending for Claudius really was due to his encountering stiff resistance, or simply a device to allow the Emperor a triumphal entry into the enemy capital:

60. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Claudius*, 17

From there (Boulogne), he crossed to Britain. In the space of a very few days he received the surrender of part of the island without a single battle or any bloodshed, returned to Rome within six months of setting out, and celebrated his triumph with the greatest of pomp. To witness it he allowed not only provincial governors to come to Rome, but even some exiles, and among the spoils of victory he fixed a naval crown next to the civic crown on the pediment of the Palatine Palace as a sign that he had crossed and, as it were, conquered Ocean. His wife Messalina followed Claudius' triumphal chariot in a carriage; then those who had won triumphal ornaments in the same campaign followed on foot wearing purple-bordered togas, with the exception of Marcus Crassus Frugi who rode a horse decorated with *phalerae* (trappings) and wore a tunic embroidered with palm branches, since this was the second time he had won the honour.

At all events, the duration of Claudius' stay in Britain was remarkably short, and in striking contrast to the lavishness of his triumphal celebrations:

61. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD) LX, 23, AD 44

Thus were parts of Britain captured at that time. Later, when Gaius Crispus and Titus Statilius were consuls, the former for the second time, Claudius came to Rome after an absence of six months, of which he had spent only sixteen days in Britain, and celebrated his triumph. In this he did everything according to precedent, including going up the steps of the Capitol on his knees with his sons-in-law supporting him on either side. To the senators who had gone on campaign with him he awarded triumphal ornaments, and this not only to those who had held consular office ... (lacuna) ... something he used to do with great lavishness and on the slightest pretext ... Having attended to these affairs he held his victory celebration, assuming a kind of consular authority for it. It took place in two theatres at the same time. On many occasions Claudius himself left the spectacle and others took charge of it in his stead. He announced as

many horse races as could be fitted into a day, but not more than ten in fact took place, for in between the races there was bear-baiting, athletic contests, and boys brought from Asia danced the Pyrrhic war-dance. Another festival, this too in honour of the victory, was given by the stage artists with the permission of the Senate. This was done on account of events in Britain, and so that other tribes might come to terms more easily, it was enacted that all the treaties made with tribes by Claudius or his lieutenants should be as binding as if made by the Senate and People.

Nor indeed was Claudius grudging in his gratitude to the true architect of his victory:

62. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Claudius*, 24

Claudius also decreed an ovation⁶ for Aulus Plautius, went out to meet him when Plautius entered the city, and walked on his left (a mark of respect) as he went to the Capitol and came away from it.

While public celebrations might serve as a vehicle to propagandise Claudius' victory in Rome, more widespread circulation of the news was assured by the issue of a number of coins celebrating the conquest, the first to bear any reference to Britain:

63. Denarius from the mint of Rome, AD 49–50 (*RIC*, I, p. 123, no. 45)



Obverse

Ti(berius) Claud(ius) Caesar Aug(ustus)
P(ontifex) M(aximus) (High Priest) Tr(ibunicia)
P(otestas) (Tribunician Power) VIII (times)
Imp(erator) XVI (times)

Reverse

De Britann(is) (From Britain)

64. Silver didrachm of Caesarea, c. AD 46 (*RIC*, I p. 131, no. 122)



Obverse

Ti(berius) Claud(ius) Caesar Aug(ustus) Germ(anicus)

P(ontifex) M(aximus) (High Priest)

Tr(ibunicia) P(otestas) (Tribunician Power)

Reverse

De Britannis (From Britain)

EXPANSION OF THE PROVINCE AND REBELLION

From their initial concentration in Colchester the legions now fanned out to produce the wider subjugation Claudius had envisaged (Dio, LX, 21, §59). While the XX Valeria remained to hold what had already been gained, the IX Hispana advanced northwards, the XIV Gemina north-west over the midlands, and the II Augusta, the best documented of them all since its legate was the future Emperor Vespasian, into the west country:

65. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Vespasian*, 4

In the reign of Claudius, Vespasian was sent to Germany as a legionary Legate through the influence of Narcissus. From there he was transferred to Britain and fought the enemy on thirty occasions. He reduced to submission two powerful tribes, more than twenty towns, and the Island of Vectis (Wight) which is very close to Britain, this partly under the command of Aulus Plautius, the Consular Governor, and partly under the command of Claudius himself. For this he received triumphal insignia and shortly afterwards two priesthoods in addition to the consulship, which he held for the last two months of the year (AD 51).

For other evidence of early troop movements, we are largely dependent on inscriptions, often funerary, which may be approximately dated:

66. The XX Valeria at Colchester before AD 60 (*RIB*, I, 200)

Marcus Favonius Facilis, son of Marcus, of the Pollian voting-tribe, Centurion of the XX Legion, lies here. Verecundus and Novicius, his freedmen, set this up.¹

67. An auxiliaryman ends his days at Colchester. His unit left the city AD 48–9 (*RIB*, I, 201)

Longinus Sdapeze, son of Matyqus, *duplicarius* (soldier on double pay) of the 1st cavalry squadron of Thracians from the district of Sardica (Sofia) aged forty with fifteen years' service lies here. His heirs had this put up under his will.

68. The IX Hispana at Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 255)

To Gaius Saufeius, son of Gaius, of the Fabian voting-tribe, from Heraclea, soldier of the IX Legion, aged forty with twenty-two years' service. He lies here.

69. The XIV Gemina at Wroxeter (*RIB*, I, 294)

Marcus Petronius, son of Lucius, of the Menenian voting-tribe from Vicetia, aged thirty-eight, a soldier of the XIV Legion Gemina, with eighteen years' service and a standard-bearer, lies here.

The Roman victories in the south-east did not, however, mean that all British resistance was broken. Rather, with expansion of the province came a multiplication of the problems that faced the new governor, Ostorius Scapula, when he assumed command in AD 47: the opportunity for native unrest in the period between governors, the need to guarantee the security of lines of communication in a situation where tribes that had voluntarily surrendered and entered into treaty relations as client kingdoms were permitted to retain their arms, the increasing problem of keeping the Welsh and Brigantian frontiers quiet simultaneously and the efforts of Caratacus, still at liberty, to create as much trouble as possible:

70. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Annals*, XII, 31–9

- 31 It was a troubled state of affairs that the Governor, Publius Ostorius, found in Britain, since the enemy had poured into allied territory with a violence that was all the greater because they thought a new commander would not take the field against them with an army that was unfamiliar to him and with winter already begun. Ostorius, on the other hand, aware that from first results spring fear or confidence, hurried forward his light cohorts, cut down those who resisted, and pursued those put to flight. Then, to prevent them from regrouping and to avoid an uneasy and untrustworthy peace giving no rest to either commander or army, he prepared to disarm suspect tribes and to hold in check the whole area between the rivers Trisanton (Trent)² and Sabrina (Severn). The first to rebel against this measure were the Iceni, a powerful nation and not yet broken in battle, since they had willingly agreed to an alliance with us.³ At their instigation the tribes round about chose as their field of battle a site enclosed by an earth rampart and with a narrow entrance to prevent the entry of cavalry. This defensive position the Roman commander prepared to break through, even though he was leading an auxiliary force unsupported by the strength of the legions. After positioning his cohorts he equipped even the cavalry squadrons for infantry action. Then at the given signal they broke through the rampart and threw the enemy into confusion, hampered as they were by their own defences. The Britons for

their part, aware of having broken the peace and with their escape routes blocked, performed many remarkable bold deeds. In that battle the Legate's son, Marcus Ostorius, earned the distinction of saving a citizen's life.

- 32 However, the defeat of the Iceni quietened those who were hesitating between peace and war, and the army was led against the Decangi (Deceangli). Their territory was devastated, and booty seized far and wide, while the enemy dared not risk an open engagement and, if they attempted to harass the Roman column by stealth, their treachery was punished. At this point the army was not far from the sea which looks across to Ireland, but trouble among the Brigantes caused the Roman commander to turn back, resolved as he was not to undertake new ventures unless earlier gains were fully secured. The Brigantes for their part settled down again once those who had taken up arms were killed and the rest pardoned. However, neither harsh treatment nor mercy made any difference to the tribe of the Silures. Instead, they carried on the war, and had to be held in check by a legionary fortress. To achieve this end more easily a colony with a strong corps of veterans was established on captured land at Camulodunum (Colchester), as a bulwark against revolt and to familiarise the (native) allies with their legal duties.⁴
- 33 Then an advance was made against the Silures. Their innate ferocity was heightened by the trust they placed in Caratacus, whose many engagements, some partially successful, others completely so, had raised his reputation to the point that he was without rival among British leaders. Then, however, though inferior in military strength, his superiority in cunning and the deceptive difficulty of the terrain allowed him to transfer the theatre of war to the Ordovices, and with his ranks swollen by those who feared the Roman peace, he attempted a final stand. He chose a site for the battle where the approaches, exits, and everything else were to our disadvantage and to his advantage. On one side were steep hills; where the gradient was easier he piled up rocks into a kind of rampart; in front flowed a river with a precarious crossing, and bands of warriors were stationed along the defences.
- 34 Besides this the tribal chiefs went round encouraging the men and raising their spirits by reducing their fears, kindling their hopes, and variously inciting them to battle. As for Caratacus, he hastened to one position after another, declaring that day, that battle would be the beginning of their restored liberty or perpetual enslavement. He invoked the names of their ancestors who had repulsed the dictator Caesar: by their valour they were free from Roman domination and taxes, and preserved the bodies of their wives and children from defilement. These and other exhortations of his the crowds applauded, and each man swore by the gods of his tribe that he would give way to neither weapons nor wounds.
- 35 This enthusiasm astounded the Roman general, daunted as he already was by the obstacle of the river, the addition of the rampart, the overhanging ridges and the fact that everything was productive of alarm and bristling with defenders. The troops on the other hand clamoured for battle, insisting that

against courage nothing was impregnable, while the Prefects and Tribunes, expressing similar views, further intensified the army's impatience. Then, having reconnoitred those points that could and could not be breached, Ostorius crossed the river without difficulty at the head of his eager troops. When the rampart was reached, our side sustained the greater proportion of wounded and killed so long as the conflict was confined to the exchange of missiles, but once a formation of locked shields had been made and the crude and chaotic pile of stones demolished, the fighting was on equal terms at close quarters, and the natives withdrew to the hilltops. Yet here too our light and heavy-armed troops rushed upon them, the former attacking them with javelins, the latter in close formation. The ranks of the Britons on the other hand, without the protection of either breastplates or helmets, were thrown into disorder, and if they stood their ground against the auxiliary troops, they were laid low by the swords and javelins of the legionaries, while if they turned to face these, they were cut down by the broadswords and spears of the auxiliaries. It was a glorious victory: Caratacus' wife and daughter were captured and his brothers surrendered.

36 Caratacus himself sought the protection of Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes, but since generally there is no security in misfortune, he was arrested⁵ and handed over to the victorious Romans in the ninth year after the war in Britain had begun (AD 51). His fame had reached beyond the islands and had spread through the adjoining provinces; in Italy too it was on people's lips, and folk longed to see who it was had defied our power for so many years. Even in Rome the name of Caratacus was well known, and in seeking to enlarge his own reputation Caesar conferred glory on the conquered man. The people were summoned as if to a great spectacle: the Praetorian Cohorts were drawn up under arms on the parade ground in front of their camp. Then as the king's vassals filed past, the ornamental bosses, torques, and spoils won in his foreign wars were paraded. Next his brothers, wife and daughter were displayed, and finally Caratacus himself. The others out of fear indulged in undignified pleading, but from Caratacus there was no downcast look, no appeal for mercy. When he stood before the tribunal, this is how he spoke:⁶

37 'If I had been as moderate in success as my noble birth and rank are great, I should have entered this city as a friend rather than as a captive, nor would you have scorned to admit to a peaceful alliance one sprung from famous ancestors and the ruler of many peoples. My present lot is as much a source of glory to you as it is degrading to myself. I had horses, men, arms, wealth; what wonder then if I regret their loss. If you wish to rule the world, does it follow that everyone welcomes servitude? If I were being dragged before you as one who had surrendered at the outset, neither my own downfall nor your glory would have become famous: oblivion would have been the consequence of my punishment. If on the other hand you spare my life, I shall always be a memorial to your clemency.' In response to this Caesar pardoned Caratacus

and his wife and brothers. Released from their chains they also gave to Agrippina, conspicuously seated as she was on another dais nearby, the same homage in terms of praise and thanks as they did the Emperor. That a woman should sit in authority before the Roman standards was clearly a novel event and one without precedent in ancient customs, but Agrippina herself was asserting her partnership in an empire won by her ancestors.

- 38 The Senate met later and there were many high-flown speeches on the capture of Caratacus to the effect that it was no less brilliant than the displaying before the Roman people of Syphax by Publius Scipio or of Perses by Lucius Paulus or of other kings exhibited in chains by other Romans. Ostorius was voted triumphal insignia, but his fortunes, which had hitherto been marked by success, soon became less certain. Either the removal of Caratacus from the scene led to a reduction in the vigour of our military operations as though the war were over, or the enemy's feeling of pity for so great a king kindled within them greater passion for revenge. A Camp-Prefect and legionary cohorts left behind to construct forts in Siluran territory were surrounded, and if assistance had not reached the beleaguered troops as a result of reports from nearby positions, they would have been massacred. As it was the Prefect, eight centurions and the best of the rank and file were killed. Shortly afterwards a Roman foraging party was overwhelmed together with the cavalry squadrons sent to their assistance.
- 39 Ostorius then brought up his light-armed cohorts, but even so he did not check the reverse until the legions intervened. Their strength made the fight equal, and then gave our side the advantage, but since the day was drawing to a close, the enemy escaped with few losses. After this there were frequent clashes, more often than not in the form of skirmishes in woods and marshes, occasioned by individual chance or gallantry, some by accident, others by design, some out of hatred, others for plunder, sometimes under orders, at other times without the knowledge of commanders. The Silures were a particularly intractable problem, infuriated as they were by a reported speech of the Roman commander that the Siluran tribe should be totally eradicated, just as the Sugambri had once been exterminated, or transported to the provinces of Gaul. So it was that two auxiliary cohorts were cut off through their Prefects' greed as they engaged in pillaging without sufficient precautions, and by gifts of booty and captives the Silures began to entice other tribes also to rebellion. At this point (AD 52) Ostorius died, worn out by the unrelenting burden of his responsibilities. The enemy for their part were delighted that a general of undoubted merit had been disposed of by the war as a whole, if not by defeat in battle.

From the Roman point of view the capture of Caratacus had been a considerable stroke of luck, though in fact it was to create as many problems as it solved. Cartimandua's role in the affair suggests not only that she had a treaty of

friendship with the Romans, but also that her hold on the widespread Brigantes was less than strong – hence the problems encountered by Ostorius Scapula (*Annals*, XII, 32) – and that her motive for removing Caratacus was not without a personal aspect. Certainly her actions must have enraged those of the tribe who still harboured anti-Roman sentiments – sentiments that Caratacus had probably hoped to galvanise into action. It is doubtless this that underlies the coming internal power struggle:

71. Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 40

On receiving the news of the Legate's death, Caesar appointed Aulus Didius in his place to avoid leaving the province without a governor. Despite a rapid crossing he found the situation had deteriorated; for in the meantime the legion under the command of Manlius Valens had suffered a reverse. Reports of the affair were exaggerated both among the enemy, so as to frighten the general on his arrival, and by Didius too when he heard them, so that his fame might be the greater if he settled matters, and his excuse the more justifiable if they persisted. Once again this defeat had been caused by the Silures, and they roamed the countryside far and wide until driven back by the approach of Didius. However, since the capture of Caratacus the most distinguished Briton in terms of military skill was Venutius from the tribe of the Brigantes, as mentioned above.⁷ He had long been loyal and under Roman protection while he remained married to Queen Cartimandua, but when presently there came a divorce followed immediately by war, he had engaged in hostilities against us as well. At first, however, they merely fought among themselves, and by cunning stratagems Cartimandua waylaid Venutius' brother and other relatives.⁸ Incensed at this and stung with shame at the prospect of being subject to a woman's rule, the enemy invaded her kingdom with a powerful and chosen band of armed men. We had foreseen this and cohorts sent to her assistance fought a sharp engagement which, after a shaky beginning, ended up more in our favour. An engagement with a similar outcome was fought by the legion commanded by Caesius Nasica; for Didius, burdened with age and with a superabundance of honours, was content to act through his subordinates and to keep the enemy at arm's length.⁹ Though these operations were carried out by two governors over a number of years, I have linked them together lest piecemeal treatment cause them to be less easily remembered.

When the propaganda coup of the initial invasion gave way to the unremitting toil of garrisoning what had been gained and the costly process of expanding frontiers – for its size indeed Britain's garrison was far above normal in terms of numbers – doubts must quickly have been raised as to the economic wisdom of opening up what had seemed like a new world. At some stage in his reign Claudius' successor Nero contemplated abandoning the province. Whether the question arose before or after the Boudiccan rebellion we cannot tell:

72. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Nero*, 18

He was never moved by any desire or hope of increasing the empire. He even considered withdrawing from Britain, and only refrained from doing so out of deference – so that he should not appear to be belittling his father's glory.¹⁰

Within the province itself, the process of expansion was not without its own internal difficulties. The practice of granting client status to those tribes that had voluntarily surrendered to Rome had no doubt been of great advantage in the initial thrust into Britain. With time, however, the danger of leaving pockets of potential trouble behind Roman lines had become only too clear – hence Scapula's attempt to disarm the Iceni (Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 31, §70). Unfortunately for Roman and native alike, the Roman tendency to overrule treaty rights at will, combined with an overbearing confidence in a military machine that could be blind to warning signals, was to serve as the spark to ignite much of the eastern part of the province. For many Britons, the liberation from native oppression that early surrender to Rome offered had quickly become ruinous and heavy-handed exploitation from which the only escape lay in rebellion.

73. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Annals*, XIV, 29–37

29 In the consulship of Caesennius Paetus and Petronius Turpilianus a severe reverse was suffered in Britain. There, as I have mentioned, the Governor Aulus Didius had merely held on to what was already gained, while his successor, Veranius, after some minor plundering raids against the Silures, was prevented by his death from taking operations any further. During his life he had had a considerable reputation for self-discipline, though in the closing words of his will he displayed his vanity. For in addition to much flattery of Nero he claimed that if he had lived another two years, he would have laid the (whole) province at his feet. At that time, however, Paulinus Suetonius was in charge of Britain. In military science and people's talk, which allows no one to be without envy, he rivalled Corbulo, and was anxious to equal the glorious recovery of Armenia by subduing enemies of the state. For this reason he prepared to attack the island of Mona (Anglesey) which had a large population and provided shelter for fugitives. Flat-bottomed boats were constructed to contend with the shallow water and shifting bottom, and in this way the infantry made the crossing. Then followed the cavalry, making use of fords or swimming beside their horses where the water was deeper.

30 Along the shore stood the enemy in a close-packed array of armed men interspersed with women dressed like Furies in funereal black, with streaming hair and brandishing torches. Round about were the Druids, their hands raised to heaven, pouring out dire curses. The Roman troops were so struck with dismay at this weird sight that they became rooted to the spot as though

their limbs were paralysed and laid themselves open to wounds. Then, bolstered by the encouragements of their commander and urging one another not to be afraid of this mass of fanatical women, they advanced with their standards, cut down all they met, and enveloped them in the flames of their own torches. After this a garrison was imposed on the conquered natives, and the groves devoted to their savage rites cut down; for it was part of their religion to drench their altars with the blood of captives and to consult their gods by means of human entrails. While Suetonius was occupied with this, he received reports of the sudden revolt of the province.

- 31 Prasutagus, King of the Iceni and famed for his long-lasting prosperity, had made Caesar his heir together with his two daughters, thinking that by such deference his kingdom and family would be kept from harm. However, things turned out differently, so much so that his kingdom was plundered by centurions, and his household by Roman slaves, as if they were the spoils of war.¹¹ To begin with his wife Boudicca was flogged and her daughters raped. The nobility of the Iceni were deprived of their hereditary estates as if the Romans had received the whole area as a gift, and the King's relatives were treated like slaves. As a result of this outrage and fear of worse to come, since they had been reduced to provincial status, the Iceni took up arms. The Trinovantes too were roused to rebellion along with others who were not yet broken by slavery and who had determined by secret conspiracy to recover their freedom. Their bitterest hatred was directed against the veteran soldiers recently settled in the colony of Camulodunum (Colchester), who were driving the natives from their homes, forcing them off their land, and calling them prisoners and slaves. The veterans' lawless activities were even encouraged by the troops, who had a similar way of behaving and hoped for the same licence in their turn. In this respect the temple dedicated to the deified Claudius was looked upon as a stronghold of eternal tyranny, and those chosen as priests were pouring out whole fortunes on the pretext of religion. Nor did it seem a difficult task to destroy a colony that was unprotected by any fortifications, something to which our commanders, putting comfort before necessity, had paid too little attention.
- 32 In the meantime, the statue of Victory at Camulodunum (Colchester) fell down for no apparent reason, and with its back turned as if it were fleeing the enemy. In addition, frenzied women prophesied that destruction was at hand, that a clamour of foreign voices had been heard in their Senate House, the theatre had resounded with wailing, and in the Thames estuary an apparition of the colony in ruins had been seen. What is more, the sea took on a bloody appearance, and shapes like human corpses left by the receding tide were interpreted as signs of hope by the Britons and with alarm by the veterans. However, as Suetonius was far away, they appealed to the Procurator, Catus Decianus, for help, but he sent barely 200 men without their full equipment. There was also a small band of regular troops there. Relying on the protection of the temple and hampered by clandestine accomplices in the rebellion who thwarted their plans, the veterans constructed

neither defensive ditch nor rampart, nor were the old men and women moved away leaving only the fighting men behind. Heedless of precaution, as though all around was peace and quiet, they found themselves surrounded by the hordes of barbarians, and when all else had been laid waste and burned at the (first) onset, the temple, in which the garrison had concentrated, was taken by storm after a two-day siege. The victorious Britons also intercepted Petilius Cerialis, the Legate of the IX Legion, as he was advancing to the rescue, routed the legion, and slaughtered its infantry contingent. Cerialis escaped with his cavalry to their camp and found shelter behind its defences. Alarmed by this disaster and the hatred of a province his greed had driven into war, the Procurator Catus crossed to Gaul.

- 33 For his part Suetonius made his way undaunted through the midst of the enemy to London, a town which, while not distinguished by the title of colony, was a very important and busy centre for traders and goods. There he was in two minds whether to choose it as the place for making a stand, but considering the small number of his troops and that Petilius' rashness had been taught quite a severe lesson, he decided to sacrifice a single town in order to save the whole province. Neither the tears nor lamentations of those who begged his help could deflect him from giving the signal to pull out and allowing into his column (only) those who could keep up with him. Those who stayed behind because their sex meant they were unfit for war, or who were burdened with age or were attached to the place, were overwhelmed by the enemy. The same disaster befell the *municipium* of Verulamium (St Albans) since the natives, with their relish for plunder and wish to avoid hard work, steered clear of the forts and military garrisons and made for places rich in spoil but unprotected by any defending force. It is reckoned that up to 70,000 citizens and provincials fell in the places I have mentioned; for the enemy did not take or sell prisoners, nor was there any other traffic of war. Instead they rushed to slaughter, hang, burn, and crucify, as though (they knew) they were destined to pay the penalty, yet were meanwhile snatching their revenge.
- 34 By now Suetonius had the XIV Legion together with detachments from the XX and auxiliaries from the nearest stations, in all about 10,000 armed men, and at this point he resolved to abandon delay and fight. He chose a site with a narrow approach and backed by a wood, having made sure that he would only have the enemy in front and that the plain of battle was open and presented no danger of an ambush. The legionaries were stationed in close order, with the light armed troops on the flanks and the cavalry massed on the (outer) wings. The forces of the Britons on the other hand pranced about far and wide in bands of infantry and cavalry, their numbers without precedent and so confident that they brought their wives with them and set them in carts drawn up around the far edge of the battlefield to witness their victory.
- 35 Boudicca rode in a chariot with her daughters before her, and as she approached each tribe, she declared that the Britons were accustomed to engage in warfare under the leadership of women. On that occasion, however,

she was not someone descended from great ancestors avenging her kingdom and her wealth, rather she was an ordinary woman avenging the freedom she had lost, her body worn out with flogging, and the violated chastity of her daughters. Roman lust had gone so far that it left nothing undefiled, not even the bodies of the old or those of young girls. Yet the gods were on the side of just revenge: a legion that had ventured battle had been destroyed; the rest were skulking in their camps or looking for a chance of escape. They would not withstand even the din and clamour of so many warriors, still less their onslaught and blows. If the Britons considered the number of their men under arms and the reasons they were fighting, they must conquer on that field of battle or die. That was her resolve as a woman; as for the men they could live on and be slaves (if they so wished).

- 36 Nor was Suetonius silent at this critical moment. Despite the confidence he had in his men's valour, his words of encouragement nevertheless contained an element of appeal: that they disregard the clamour and empty threats of the natives. There were more women visible in their ranks than fighting men, and they, unwarlike and poorly armed, routed on so many occasions, would immediately give way when they recognised the steel and courage of those who had always conquered them. Even when many legions were involved, it was a few men who actually decided battles. It would redound to their honour that their small numbers won the glory of a whole army. Only let them keep their close order, and once they had discharged their javelins, carry on felling and slaughtering the enemy with their shield bosses and swords, without any thought for booty. Once victory was won all else would be theirs. Such was the enthusiasm that greeted the commander's words, and so ready and eager were the seasoned troops, with their great experience of battle, to hurl their javelins, that Suetonius gave the signal for battle, certain of the outcome.
- 37 At first the legion did not move from its position and kept the narrow confines of the defile as its protection. Then, as the enemy came closer, they loosed off all their javelins against them with deadly accuracy and burst forward in a wedge-shaped formation. The auxiliaries attacked in the same manner, while the cavalry, with lances extended, broke through any stout resistance they encountered. The remaining Britons turned tail, but their escape was difficult because the ring of wagons had blocked the exits. In addition, the Roman soldiers did not refrain from slaughtering even the womenfolk, while the baggage animals too, transfixed with weapons, added to the piles of bodies. The glory won that day was outstanding and equal to the victories of old; for some there are who record that almost 80,000 Britons fell, while Roman casualties amounted to some 400 dead and a slightly larger number wounded. Boudicca ended her life with poison, and when Poenius Postumius, the Camp Prefect of the II Legion, learned of the success of the XIV and XX Legions, he ran himself through with his sword because he had cheated his own legion of equal glory, and contrary to military regulations had refused to carry out the orders of his commanding officer.

Though lacking the detail found in the *Annals* account, the theme of the rebellion had already been touched upon by Tacitus in the biography of his father-in-law. There too his treatment of British complaints constituted an indictment of Roman rule:

74. *Agricola* 15

There was nothing to be gained by submission except heavier impositions upon a people that seemed to endure them without a murmur. At one time they used to have only one king, but now two were set over them – a Governor to vent his fury on their blood, a Procurator on their property. Whether these overlords worked as a team or were at each other's throat was equally ruinous for those under them. The agents of either, centurions on one side, slaves on the other, added insult to injury.

Characteristically, Tacitus' account of the causes of the rebellion chooses to concentrate on the political and personal grievances of the Iceni and the overbearing Roman treatment of the Trinovantes. That there were other grievances of a more economic nature, however, is brought out by Dio Cassius.¹²

75. *Epitome of Dio Cassius*, LXII, 1–2

- 1 While this child's play was going on in Rome, a dreadful disaster occurred in Britain: two cities were sacked, 80,000 Romans and provincials were slaughtered, and the island fell into the hands of the enemy. All this, moreover, the Romans sustained at the hands of a woman, something that in fact caused them the greatest of shame. Indeed the gods gave them advance warning of the disaster: during the night a clamour of foreign voices mingled with laughter had been heard in the council chamber and in the theatre uproar and lamentation, but it was no mortal who uttered those words and groans; houses were seen underwater in the river Thames, and the Ocean between the island of Britain and Gaul on one occasion turned blood-red at high tide.
- 2 The ostensible cause of the war was the confiscation of money which Claudius had given to the leading Britons, but which now had to be repaid – so at least the Procurator of the island Decianus Catus claimed. For this reason, therefore, they rose in revolt, this and the fact that Seneca had lent them 10 million (drachmas = 40 million sesterces) they did not want in the hope of a good return, and had then called in the debt all at once and in a heavy-handed manner.¹³ However, the one person who most roused them to anger and persuaded them to go to war against the Romans, the one person thought worthy of leading them and who directed the course of the whole war, was Boudouica, a woman of the British royal family who possessed more

spirit than is usual among women. Having collected an army of 120,000, she mounted a tribunal made in the Roman fashion out of earth. In stature she was very tall and grim in appearance, with a piercing gaze and a harsh voice. She had a mass of very fair hair which she grew down to her hips, and wore a great gold torque and a multi-coloured tunic folded round her, over which was a thick cloak fastened with a brooch. This was how she always dressed. And now, taking a spear in her hand so as to present an impressive sight to everyone, she spoke as follows.

It goes without saying that the speech Dio assigns to Boudicca has no more validity than the fabrication Tacitus attributes to her, though it does serve to emphasise the fact that writers, through their education, were not blind to the other side's point of view, even if such awareness was only manifested in terms of rhetoric:

76. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXII, 3–6

- 3 'You have learned from actual experience what a difference there is between freedom and slavery. As a result, though some of you through your ignorance of which is better were previously deceived by the Romans' tempting promises, now at least you have tried them both and understand how great a mistake you made in preferring an imported tyranny to your ancestral way of life. You have realised how much better is poverty with no master than riches accompanied by slavery. For what great dishonour, what extreme of grief have we not suffered from the moment these Romans arrived in Britain? Have we not been entirely deprived of our most important possessions, and pay taxes on what is left? In addition to pasturing and tilling all our other property for them, do we not also pay an annual tax on our very bodies? How much better would it have been to be sold to masters once and for all, rather than to ransom ourselves every year and retain the empty name of freedom! How much better to have been slaughtered and perish than to go around with a tax on our heads! But why do I mention this? Not even death is free with them; you know how much we pay even for the dead. Among the rest of humanity death frees even those who are slaves; only among the Romans do the dead live for their profit. Why is it that though we have no money – how could we have any, from what source? – we are stripped and despoiled like murder-victims? And why should they moderate their behaviour with the passage of time when they have treated us like this from the outset, a time when all men show some consideration even for the animals they have newly caught?
- 4 Yet, to tell the truth, we are ourselves responsible for all these troubles. We allowed them to set foot upon our island in the first place, and did not immediately drive them out as once we did the famous Julius Caesar. We did

not make even the attempt to set sail a frightful prospect for them while they were still far away, as we did in the case of Augustus and Gaius Caligula. For this reason, though we inhabit so large an island, or rather a continent as it were, surrounded by the sea, and though we have a world of our own and are separated from all the rest of mankind by the Ocean to such an extent that people believe we live in another world under another sky, and some of them – the most erudite included – have hitherto not known for certain what we are called, yet we have been despised and trampled under foot by men who understand nothing except giving vent to their greed. But if we have not done so in the past, let us do our duty now, my countrymen, friends and kinsmen – for I consider you all my kinsmen inasmuch as you inhabit a single island and are called by one common name – now while we still remember freedom, so that we may bequeath it to our children both as a term and a reality. For if we forget altogether that happy state in which we grew up, what will they do who are reared in slavery?

- 5 This I say not to make you hate your present state, for hatred of it you already have, nor to make you fear the future, for you already fear it, but in order to praise you because of your own accord you choose the necessary path of action and to thank you for being ready to unite with myself and one another. Have no fear of the Romans, for they are superior to us in neither numbers nor bravery. Proof of this is the fact that they have encased themselves in helmets, breastplates and greaves, and have built themselves stockades, walls and trenches so as not to suffer any harm from enemy attack. This course they choose out of fear, rather than acting as the spirit moves, as we do. For we enjoy such a superabundance of courage that we regard our tents as safer places than walls, and our shields as more effective protection than all their arms and armour. In consequence, when we are victorious we capture them, and when we are beaten we escape. If we choose to retreat anywhere, we go to ground in swamps and mountains, the nature of which renders us undetectable and beyond capture. They on the other hand cannot pursue anyone because of the weight they carry, neither can they escape, and if ever they do elude us, they take refuge in pre-arranged spots and there pen themselves up as if in a trap. It is not only in this respect, however, that they are vastly inferior to us: they are also incapable of enduring hunger or thirst, cold or heat as we do. Instead they need shade and shelter, kneaded bread, wine and oil, and if ever they run short of any of these, they perish. For us on the other hand any grass or root serves as bread, any plant juice as oil, any water as wine, any tree as home. What is more, this land is familiar to us and our ally, but to them it is unknown and hostile. The rivers we swim naked, but they cannot cross them with ease even in boats. So let us go against them placing our trust in good fortune; let us show them that they are hares and foxes attempting to rule over dogs and wolves.'
- 6 Having made her speech, she then engaged in a type of divination by releasing a hare from the fold of her tunic, and since it ran on what was for

them the lucky side, the whole mass of people shouted for joy and Boudouica raised her hand to heaven and said: 'I thank you, Andraste, and I call upon you woman to woman, not as one who rules over Egyptians with their burdens as Nitocris did, nor over Assyrian traders as did Semiramis – this much we have learned from the Romans – nor yet indeed as one ruling over the Romans themselves, as once Messalina did, then Agrippina and now Nero – for though he has the title of man, he is in fact a woman, as his singing and playing the lyre and painted face declare – but as one who rules over Britons who have no knowledge of tilling the earth or working with their hands, but are experts in the art of war and hold all things in common, even their wives and children. Through this the women too possess the same valour as the men. As queen, then, of such men and women I pray to you and ask for victory, safety and freedom from men who are insolent, unjust, insatiable and impious – if indeed we ought to call them men when they bathe in warm water, eat fancy food, drink unmixed wine, smear themselves with myrrh, sleep on soft beds with boys – boys past their prime at that – and are slaves to a lyre-player – and a bad one at that. May this woman, Domitia Nero, reign no longer over me or you men; rather let her lord it over the Romans with her singing; for they deserve to be slaves to such a woman, whose tyranny they have put up with for so long. For us on the other hand may you alone, Lady, for ever be our leader.'

Following the rhetorical interlude, Dio resumes his narrative with a description of British atrocities, Paulinus' reasons for bringing the issue to a decisive engagement, the speeches he is supposed to have made and the battle itself:

77. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXII, 7–12

- 7 Having made her harangue after this fashion, Boudouica led her army against the Romans, who happened to be leaderless because their commander, Paulinus, had gone off on campaign to the island of Mona (Anglesey), which lies close to Britain. For this reason she sacked and plundered two Roman cities and inflicted untold slaughter, as I have said. Those who were taken prisoner by the Britons underwent every possible outrage; the most atrocious and bestial committed was this: they hung up naked the noblest and most beautiful women, cut off their breasts and sewed them to their mouths so that they seemed to be eating them. Then they impaled them on sharp stakes which ran the length of their bodies. All this they did to the accompaniment of sacrifices, feasting and orgies in their various sacred places, but especially in the grove of Andate. This is the name they gave to Victory, and they regarded her with particular reverence.
- 8 As it turned out Paulinus had already reduced Mona to surrender, and on learning of the disaster in Britain he immediately sailed back there from the

island. However, fear of the natives' numbers and their mad fury dissuaded him from risking everything against them. Rather, he was inclined to put off the battle till a more suitable occasion, but since he was short of food and there was no let-up in the native onslaught, he was forced to engage them, even against his better judgement. Boudouica, with an army of up to 230,000 men, rode in a chariot herself and arranged the others in their various positions. Paulinus on the other hand could not extend his own line to face (all of hers – they would not have stretched far enough even if drawn up one man deep, so outnumbered were they. Nor did he dare to join battle in a single formation for fear of being surrounded and cut to pieces. So he disposed his army in three divisions so as to fight on several fronts at once, and had each of the divisions maintain close ranks so as to be difficult to penetrate.

- 9 As he drew up his men and set them in their positions he encouraged them as follows: 'Come, my fellow soldiers, come Romans, show these murdering savages how great is your superiority even in adversity. For it would be shameful for you to lose in ignominy what a short time ago you won through your valour. On numerous occasions we ourselves and our fathers have defeated numerically superior adversaries with fewer numbers than we now have. Do not be alarmed by the size of their forces or their rebellious spirit – their boldness is the product of a recklessness bolstered by neither arms nor training – neither be alarmed by the fact that they have set fire to a couple of towns. They did not take them by force or as the result of a battle, but one through treachery, the other after its evacuation. So exact from them the due penalty for their deeds, so that they learn by experience what sort of men it is they have wronged compared with themselves.'
- 10 This was the speech he made to one division. He then went to another and said: 'Now is the time, my fellow soldiers, for spirit, now the time for daring. If today you show yourselves brave, you will recover everything you have lost. If you conquer these people, no one else will stand against us any longer. Through a single battle such as this you will secure what is already yours, and all else you will make subject to you. Our forces, even those in other countries, will seek to match you, and our enemies will stand in awe of you. So you have it in your power either to rule all men without fear – both those your fathers bequeathed to you and those you yourselves have gained – or to be deprived of them altogether: the choice to be free, to rule, to be rich and happy rather than to suffer the opposite through want of effort.'
- 11 Such was the speech he made to this division. He then went to the third and spoke to them too: 'You have heard the kind of thing these accursed creatures have done to us, or rather you have seen some of them yourselves. Choose then whether you wish to suffer the same as those others suffered, and even more, to be driven altogether from Britain, or by conquering to avenge those who have perished and to provide an example to all men of kindness and fairness to the obedient, and of inevitable harshness towards the rebellious. For my part I hope above all that we conquer: in the first place because we have the

gods as our allies, since they generally side with those who have been wronged, then because of the valour we have inherited from our forefathers, since we are Romans and have conquered all mankind by our valour, then by virtue of our experience, since we have defeated and subdued those very men who are now pitted against us, and finally as a result of our reputation, for it is not adversaries we are about to engage but our slaves whom we conquered even when they were free and independent. If, however, something unexpected happens – I will not shrink from mentioning even this possibility – it is better for us to fall fighting manfully than to be captured and impaled, to see our own entrails cut from us, to be skewered on red-hot spits, and to perish by being rendered down in boiling water, to perish as though we had been thrown to lawless and godless wild beasts. Let us therefore either conquer them or die here. Britain will be a fine monument for us even if all other Romans are driven out of it, since at all events we shall possess it with our bodies.’

- 12 After this speech and others of a similar nature he raised the signal for battle. Thereupon the two sides closed on one another: the natives with much shouting and threatening warsongs, the Romans in silence and order until they came within javelin range. Then, while the enemy was still advancing against them at walking pace, the Romans rushed forward in a mass at a given signal and charged them for all they were worth. In the onslaught they easily broke through the opposing ranks of the Britons, though they were surrounded by the great numbers (of the enemy) and engaged in fighting on all sides at once. The struggle took many forms: light-armed troops exchanged missiles with other light-armed forces; heavy-armed were matched against heavy-armed; cavalry engaged cavalry, and Roman archers clashed with the native chariots. The natives would swoop upon the Romans with their chariots, throwing them into confusion, and then be themselves repulsed by the arrows, since they fought without breastplates. Horseman would ride down infantryman, and infantryman would strike down cavalryman. One group of Romans in close formation would advance on the chariots; another would be scattered by them. Some of the Britons would close with the archers and put them to flight; others kept out of their way at a distance, and all this was going on not just at one spot but in three places at once. Both sides fought for a long time, spurred on by equal spirit and daring, but finally, late in the day, the Romans prevailed. Many Britons were cut down in the battle and before the wagons and the woods. Many too were taken alive. Some, however, escaped and made preparations to fight again, but when in the meantime Boudouica fell ill and died the Britons mourned her deeply and gave her a lavish funeral, and then they disbanded in the belief that now they really were defeated.

The victory over the Britons, closely followed by the death of Boudicca, ostensibly brought a rapid end to the rebellion itself:

78. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 16

The favourable outcome of a single battle restored the province to its old submission.

The blow it had caused to Roman pride and prestige, however, called for further retribution, which threatened in turn to plunge the province into a protracted period of unrest and misery. The arrival of a new Procurator, therefore, one with roots in the Celtic society of Gaul, and who doubtless saw his task as promoting economic recovery, brought him inevitably into conflict with the Governor. Our source, Tacitus, chooses to present the clash in terms of personality, and to side with the military, but it is likely that the real cause of dissension lay in the more mundane realm of returning the province to a position of economic viability:

79. Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 38–9

- 38 The whole army was now concentrated and kept under canvas to finish off what remained of the war. Caesar increased troop numbers with 2,000 legionary soldiers sent from Germany together with eight auxiliary cohorts and 1,000 cavalry. On their arrival, the IX Legion was brought up to strength in terms of legionary troops.¹⁴ The cohorts and cavalry squadrons were stationed in new winter quarters and any tribe that had wavered in its loyalty or had been hostile was ravaged with fire and sword. However, nothing afflicted the enemy as much as famine, since they had taken no thought for sowing crops and had actually diverted people of all ages to the war effort, while marking out Roman provisions for their own use. In addition, the fierce tribes were all the more reluctant to settle back into peace because Julius Classicianus, who had been sent to succeed Catus, was on bad terms with Suetonius and allowed his personal animosity to stand in the way of the national interest. He was giving out that it would be well to await a new governor who would deal gently with those who surrendered, without feelings of enmity and anger or the arrogance of a conqueror. At the same time he reported to Rome that they should expect no end to hostilities unless a replacement were found for Suetonius, whose failures he attributed to the man's incompetence, his successes to chance.
- 39 Accordingly, Polyclitus, one of the imperial freedmen, was sent to examine the situation in Britain with high hopes on the part of Nero that his influence could not only effect a reconciliation between the Governor and Procurator, but would also pacify the rebellious spirits of the natives. In the event, Polyclitus with his enormous entourage proved a burden to Italy and Gaul, and when he crossed Ocean, an object of dread to our own soldiers as well. To the enemy, however, he was an object of derision, for among them the flame of liberty still burned and they had yet to experience the power of freedmen.

They were amazed that a general and an army that had carried through so great a war should yield obedience to slaves. The whole situation, however, was reported back to the emperor in a more favourable light. Suetonius was kept in office, but later, because he lost a few ships and their crews on the coast, he was ordered to hand over the army to Petronius Turpilianus, who had just vacated the consulship, on the grounds that the war was still continuing. By not provoking the enemy nor being provoked by them, Turpilianus imposed upon his slothful inactivity the honourable name of peace.

Despite the gloss which Tacitus puts on the event, it is more than likely that the recall of Suetonius Paulinus owed much (pace Salway [1], p. 123 n.) to Classicianus' intervention. At some stage in the resulting period of recovery and consolidation Classicianus died in Britain. His tombstone, set up in what was clearly the commercial and by now also the political capital, London, survives:

80. *RIB*, I, 12 (restored)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of [Gaius Julius] Alpinus Classicianus, [son of Gaius], of the [F]abian voting-tribe ... (2 lines missing) ... Procurator of the Province of Britain, Julia Pacata I [...] daughter of Indus,¹⁵ his wife, (set this up).

TUMULT AND EXPANSION

The years after the rebellion were marked by no recorded attempt to enlarge the province, and despite the typically critical slant that Tacitus gives to the governorships of Petronius Turpilianus and Trebellius Maximus it would seem that Rome recognised the need for peace and stability:

81. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Agricola*, 16

Petronius Turpilianus was therefore sent, ostensibly because of his greater readiness to listen to pleas, and since he had not witnessed the crimes of the enemy, he would for that very reason be more lenient to those who repented of their previous actions. He settled the earlier upheaval but ventured no further moves before handing over the province to Trebellius Maximus. Trebellius was even less inclined to action and had no military experience; instead he kept control of the province by a rather easy-going administration. The natives too now learned to condone seductive vices, and the period of civil war provided a valid excuse for his inactivity.¹

It is perhaps a measure of the success of these two governors that at some stage in the late 60s the XIV Gemina was withdrawn from Britain:

82. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 66

Vitellius decided to send them (the XIV Gemina) back to Britain, from which they had been withdrawn by Nero.

To fill the gap caused by the departure of the XIV from Wroxeter, the XX was moved up from South Wales, where it had been since its transfer from Colchester in AD 49 to make way for the colonia there:

83. From Wroxeter (*RIB*, I, 293)

Gaius Mannius Secundus, son of Gaius, of the Pollian voting-tribe, from Pollentia, a soldier of the XX Legion, aged fifty-two, with thirty-one years' service, *beneficiarius* (seconded for special duties) of the Praetorian Legate, lies here.

During the upheaval ushered in by the forced suicide of Nero in AD 68 Britain remained conspicuously on the sidelines. Tacitus at one point paints a glowing picture of the integrity displayed by the legions in Britain:

84. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Histories*, I, 9

There were no disturbances among the army in Britain and in all the tumult of the civil wars no other legions conducted themselves with greater integrity. This was either because they were far away and cut off by Ocean, or because frequent campaigning had taught them to hate the enemy more than each other.

However, it is clear that dissension was not altogether absent, and Tacitus himself provides two versions of events:

85. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 16

However, a serious situation developed as a result of mutiny when the troops, accustomed as they were to campaigning, became restive through having nothing to do. Though he was able to avoid the wrath of his army by fleeing and going into hiding, Trebellius was despised and humiliated as a result. Thereafter he governed under sufferance with an agreement, as it were, being reached that gave the army licence to indulge itself, the commander his life; and so the mutiny came to an end without bloodshed.

The second, later version seems designed as a correction:

86. Tacitus, *Histories*, I, 59–60

59 Nor did the troops in Raetia delay going over to Vitellius' side at once, and even in Britain there was no hesitation.

60 The Governor was Trebellius Maximus, a man whose greed and miserliness rendered him despised and detested by the army. Hatred of him was fanned by Roscius Coelius, the Legate of the XX Legion, who had long been at odds with Trebellius, but now, with the opportunity offered by the civil war, their enmity flared up with greater intensity. Trebellius accused Coelius of plotting

mutiny and undermining discipline; Coelius accused Trebellius of robbing the legions and reducing them to poverty. In the meantime the morale of the army deteriorated as a result of this shameful bickering on the part of the commanders. Ill-will reached the point where Trebellius, rejected by the insults of the auxiliary forces and deserted by the cohorts and cavalry, who went over to Coelius' side, took refuge with Vitellius. The province, however, remained quiet even though its Governor had gone: the government was carried on by the legionary commanders, who in theory were equal to one another, though because of his audacity Coelius' influence was the greater.

In addition to 'verbal' support, the three legions in Britain also sent large contingents to support Vitellius against his rival Otho, though in the event they played no real part in the actual conflict:

87. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 57

Meanwhile, unaware of his victory (over Otho) Vitellius was assembling the remnants of the German army as if for a continuation of the war ... He supplemented his forces with a levy of 8,000 men drawn from the army in Britain.

With the death of Otho and the departure of Trebellius from Britain Vitellius was now free to send a governor who might find greater favour with the garrison there:

88. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 65

Trebellius had fled from Britain because of the soldiers' anger, and in his place was sent Vettius Bolanus, a member of Vitellius' retinue.

Similarly dispatched to Britain was the XIV Legion Gemina which had supported Otho, but in this case the purpose was to isolate them:²

89. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 11

Nero had increased the fame (of the XIV) by his choice of them as his best troops, and as a result of this they had long been loyal to Nero and were resolutely devoted to Otho.

Before long, however, the victorious Vitellius was himself confronted by a new contender for imperial honours, Vespasian. The latter's supporters wasted no time in communicating with the XIV Gemina:

90. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 86

Letters were sent to the XIV in Britain and the I in Spain, since both legions had been pro-Otho and against Vitellius.

Vitellius himself on the other hand sought support from a less than enthusiastic Governor of the province:

91. Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 97

Vitellius summoned auxiliaries from Germany, Britain and Spain, but in a leisurely manner and pretending there was no real need. Similarly, the provincial governors prevaricated: Hordeonius Flaccus because he suspected the Batavians and was concerned about having a war on his hands, Vettius Bolanus because Britain was never sufficiently quiet. Besides, both were doubtful in their allegiance.

In the event, however, contingents from Britain did participate in the second battle of Bedriacum, probably those earlier summoned for action against Otho:

92. Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 22

Others report that ... the V and XV Legions together with detachments of the IX, II and XX British legions formed the centre of the battle formation ...

Following the defeat of Vitellius, the legions in Britain wisely changed sides, though not without a certain reluctance from some quarters:

93. Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 44

With the capture of Valens everything turned to the victor's (Vespasian's) advantage. It began in Spain with the I Legion Adiutrix which remembered Otho and was hostile to Vitellius. This then won over the X and VI Legions. Nor was Gaul slow to join in, and Britain was secured by the generally favourable opinion of Vespasian, who had been placed in command of the II Legion there by Claudius and had conducted himself with distinction in the war. This was not, however, without some resistance on the part of the other legions in which many centurions and other ranks owed their promotion to Vitellius, and were uneasy about changing an emperor they already knew (for one they didn't).³

In Britain itself the reduction in the size of the garrisoning forces by some 8,000 troops, together with the recent indiscipline of those that remained, had no doubt been instrumental in inducing within the Governor, Bolanus, a tendency towards inaction:

94. Tacitus, *Agricola* 16

Vettius Bolanus likewise refrained from troubling Britain by enforcing discipline while the civil wars yet continued. There was the same lack of response to the enemy, the same insubordination in military quarters. The only difference is that Bolanus, through his innocuous character, had done nothing to stir up hatred against himself and so won affection if not obedience.

Inaction as far as the natives were concerned was not, however, a policy that would guarantee peace. Among the Brigantes the enmity stirred up by Cartimandua's treatment of Caratacus resurfaced as Roman attention was diverted elsewhere:

95. Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 45

As a result of these differences and the frequent rumours of civil war the Britons were induced to pluck up courage by Venutius, who, in addition to his fierce temperament and hatred for all things Roman, was fired with personal animosity towards Queen Cartimandua. She ruled over the Brigantes, exercising great influence by virtue of her noble birth, and had increased her standing when, with her treacherous seizure of King Caratacus, she appeared to have paved the way for Claudius' triumph. From this act came wealth and the self-indulgence of success. She rejected her husband Venutius and took his armour-bearer Vellocatus as her husband and consort. The royal house was straightaway scandalised by this shameful event: the people sided with the husband, the adulterer was bolstered by the lust and savagery of the queen. Venutius, therefore, summoned help (from outside) and with a simultaneous revolt on the part of the Brigantes themselves forced Cartimandua into a very tight corner. She in turn appealed to the Romans for help, and after a number of indecisive engagements our cohorts and cavalry squadrons managed to extricate the queen from her dangerous situation. Venutius was left with the kingdom, we the war.

What action Bolanus took against Venutius is not recorded, unless a reference to an initial Brigantian campaign is to be seen lurking behind the poetry of Statius addressed to Bolanus' son Crispinus:

96. Statius (1st C. AD), *Silvae*, V, 2, 142–9

What glory will extol the plains of Caledonia, when some great-aged native of that wild country tells you: 'Here it was your father's custom justice to dispense; from this mound his squadrons he addressed. Far and wide his look-out posts and strongholds did he set – do you see them? – and with a ditch these walls he

girt. These gifts, these weapons to the gods of war did he devote – you see the dedications still. This breastplate he himself put on when battle summoned; this from off a British king he seized.

For certain, however, the XIV Gemina was once again removed from Britain, for service against the Batavi, and never returned:

97. Tacitus, *Histories*, IV, 68

The XIV Legion was summoned from Britain, as were the VI and I from Spain.

In AD 71 Bolanus was himself recalled and replaced by Petilius Cerialis, his first task to settle the Brigantes:⁴

98. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17

Petilius Cerialis at once instilled a feeling of terror by attacking the territory of the Brigantes, said to be the most populous of the whole province. There were numerous battles, some of them bloody, and a large part of Brigantia was either annexed or overrun.

With Cerialis had come a new legion, the II Adiutrix, to bring the garrison back up to a total of four. This was stationed at Lincoln while the IX Hispana was advanced to a new position at York:

99. From Lincoln AD 76 (?) (*RIB*, I, 258)

Titus Valerius Pudens, son of Titus, of the Claudian voting-tribe, from Savaria, a soldier of the II Legion Adiutrix Pia Fidelis in the century of Dossenius Proculus, aged thirty, with six (?) years' service lies here. His heir set this up at his own expense.

Cerialis' own successor was in turn to deal once again with the continuing problem of the Silures:

100. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17

Cerialis indeed would have overshadowed the administration and repute of any other successor, but Julius Frontinus, a man who reached the pinnacle of greatness that was then possible, shouldered and bore the burden. By force of arms

he reduced the powerful and warlike tribe of the Silures, surmounting not only the valour of the enemy but also the difficulty of the terrain.

As part of Frontinus' campaign the II Augusta (moved from Exeter to Gloucester to take the place of the XX when it was transferred to Wroxeter) was now stationed in a new legionary fortress at Caerleon:

101. *RIB*, I, 365

To the spirits of the departed. Gaius Valerius Victor, son of Gaius, of the Galerian voting-tribe, from Lugdunum (Lyons), Standard-bearer of the II Legion Augusta, with seventeen years' service, lived forty-five years. Under the supervision of Annius Perpetuus, his heir, (this was set up).

Similarly, a new legionary fortress was begun at Chester, to be occupied for a time by the II Adiutrix:

102. *RIB*, I, 476

Gaius Juventius Capito, son of Gaius, of the Claudian voting-tribe, from Aprus, a soldier in the II Legion Adiutrix Pia Fidelis in the century of Julius Clemens, aged forty, with seven (or seventeen) years' service (lies here).

In turn, AD 77⁵ saw the arrival in Britain of Frontinus' successor, Gnaeus Julius Agricola. His biography⁶ from the pen of his son-in-law presents us with the most vivid and detailed picture we have not only of any governor but also of one who extended the province further than was ever to be achieved again.⁷

103. Tacitus, *Agricola*

1–3 (Introduction: After years of tyranny under Domitian a new government allows once again the accomplishments of great men to be openly recorded and praised.)

4 Gnaeus Julius Agricola was born in the ancient and famous colony of Forum Julii (Fréjus), and had in both his grandfathers an Imperial Procurator, an office that marks a pinnacle of achievement for the Equestrian class. His father, Julius Graecinus, was a member of the Senate and well known for his interest in rhetoric and philosophy. These very accomplishments earned him the enmity of Gaius Caesar (Caligula) since he was commanded to impeach Marcus Silanus and was put to death because he refused to do so. His mother was Julia Procilla, a woman of rare virtue. He was brought up in her

loving care and passed his boyhood and youth in the pursuit of all the liberal arts. He was shielded from the enticements of vice by his own good and honest disposition, as well as by the fact that from his earliest days he lived and was educated at Massilia (Marseilles), a place that combined a harmonious blend of Greek courtesy and provincial frugality. I well remember that he himself used to tell how in his early youth he would have drunk more deeply of philosophy than a Roman of Senatorial class was allowed, had not his mother's prudence checked the vehemence and passion of his intellect. Doubtless his lofty and enthusiastic character reached out for the beauty and splendour of great and noble glory with more impetuosity than circumspection. Soon, however, discretion and maturity cooled his ardour and he retained that most difficult of philosophy's lessons, a sense of proportion.

- 5 His first experience of army life was in Britain, where he won the approval of Suetonius Paulinus, a diligent and careful commander, who chose him out for service in his headquarters to test his metal. Agricola did not regard his position of Tribune or his inexperience with either a devil-may-care attitude after the fashion of those young men who turn military service into self-indulgence, or out of idleness as excuses for riotous living and going on furlough. Instead he got to know the province and made himself known to the troops; he learned from the experts, followed the best examples, never set out to achieve anything simply for self-advertisement, never shirked a duty out of fear, and in everything acted with caution and alertness. For certain Britain was never more troubled and its future more in the balance: veterans had been slaughtered, colonies burned, armies beleaguered. At one moment they fought for survival, at another for victory. Though the whole campaign was conducted through the strategy and under the leadership of another, and though supreme command and the glory of recovering the province devolved upon the governor, yet all this gave the young Agricola skill, experience and stimulus. His mind was filled with a desire for military glory, an unwelcome feature in an age which placed a sinister construction upon distinction, and when a great reputation was as much a danger as a bad one.
- 6 (Agricola returns to Rome and is married. He is assigned to the province of Asia as Quaestor and is not tainted by the opportunities for financial corruption. Following the birth of a daughter he gains the Tribuneship and Praetorship before Galba chose him to investigate the loss of temple treasure under Nero).
- 7 (In the chaos of AD 68–69 his mother is murdered. In the final bout of civil war he sides with Vespasian and is subsequently tasked with raising recruits for the army.) ... Mucrinus sent Agricola to enrol recruits to the army, and since he performed this with integrity and energy, he put him in charge of the XX legion (in Britain), which had been slow to transfer its allegiance. His predecessor in the position (Roscius Coelius) was alleged to have acted disloyally; in fact the legion was too much for even the Consular Governors, who regarded it with fear, and its Praetorian commander was unable to control it, though it is uncertain whether this was due to his own or the

soldiers' character. For this reason Agricola was chosen to be its new commander and to bring it to book, but with a singular display of restraint he preferred to claim he found the troops loyal rather than made them so.

- 8 At this time Vettius Bolanus was in charge of Britain, governing with a gentler hand than a warlike province requires. Agricola restrained his own energy and curbed his enthusiasm so that it should not become unduly strong – he had in fact learned to be deferential and to combine his own interest with duty. Soon after Britain received as its Consular Governor Petilius Cerialis. Now Agricola's good qualities had scope to make themselves felt. Initially it was only hard work and danger that Cerialis shared with him, but soon it was fame too he shared. On many occasions Cerialis put him in command of an army detachment to test him; sometimes he increased his forces on the strength of the result. Yet Agricola never boasted about his exploits with a view to self-glorification: he attributed his success instead to the commander who had initiated the action, as a subordinate should. And so, by his capacity for obedience and his modesty in relating his achievements he avoided envy but gained renown.
- 9 (Returning to Rome Agricola is elevated to Patrician rank, becomes governor of Aquitania, in which he distinguished himself, and avoided internal conflict with the Procurators.) ... He was kept in that post for less than three years and then recalled with the immediate expectation of the consulship. This was accompanied by the common belief that Britain was going to be assigned to him as his province, not that this figured in his conversation, but simply because he seemed equal to the task. Rumour is not always wrong; on occasion it even makes the right choice. While consul he betrothed his daughter to me – she was then a girl of outstanding promise – I was in my early manhood – and after his consulship he gave her to me in marriage. Immediately thereafter he was put in charge of Britain and in addition given the sacred office of Priest.
- 10–12 (The Geography and People of Britain: see § 15.)
- 13 The Britons themselves readily submit to recruitment into the army, paying tribute, and obligations imposed by the government so long as there are no abuses: these they do not take kindly to since they have been broken to obedience but not yet to slavery. The deified Julius (Caesar) was indeed the first Roman to enter Britain with an army, but though he intimidated the inhabitants by a victory and gained control of the coast, it is clear he merely pointed it out to those who came after him; he did not bequeath it to them. Soon came the civil wars, and the arms of leading men were turned against the state. Britain long remained consigned to oblivion even when peace returned. The deified Augustus called this 'policy', Tiberius an 'injunction'. It is common knowledge that Gaius Caesar (Caligula) entertained thoughts of entering Britain, but his fickle mind was prone to rapid vacillations and his grand enterprise against Germany had failed. The deified Claudius was in fact the one responsible for this great undertaking. Legions and auxiliary

forces were shipped across; Vespasian was enrolled to share the undertaking, the first step towards his future imperial rank. Tribes were subjugated, kings taken prisoner, and Vespasian singled out by fate.

- 14 The first governor of consular rank appointed was Aulus Plautius, and after him Ostorius Scapula, both of them outstanding military figures. (Under them) the nearest parts of Britain were gradually formed into a province, and in addition a colony of veterans was founded. Certain tribal areas were given to King Cogidubnus – he in fact remained totally loyal down to our times – in accordance with the Roman People's old and long-standing policy of making even kings their agents in enslaving peoples. Next Didius hung on to what had been won by his predecessors, pushing forward at most a few forts to more advanced positions, and by this sought to gain credit for enlarging his sphere of operations. Didius was succeeded in turn by Veranius, and within a year he was dead. After him Suetonius Paulinus enjoyed two years of success, subduing tribes and strengthening garrisons. Encouraged by these successes he attacked the island of Mona (Anglesey) which was providing the resistance with supplies, but thereby he exposed his rear to surprise attack.
- 15 With their fears allayed by the absence of the governor the Britons began to brood upon the evils of slavery, to compare the injuries they suffered and to make them worse by dwelling on them. There was nothing to be gained by submission (they said) except heavier impositions upon a people that seemed to endure them without murmur. At one time they used to have one king, but now two were set over them – a Governor to vent his fury on their blood, a Procurator on their property. Whether these overlords worked as a team or were at each other's throat was equally ruinous for those under them. The agents of either, centurions on one side, slaves on the other, added insult to injury. There was nothing safe from their avarice and lust. In battle it is the stronger who gets the spoils, but now their homes were being seized, their children abducted, recruitment imposed by men who for the most part were unwarlike cowards, as if it were only for their own country that the Britons did not know how to die. What a small band of Romans had crossed over, if the Britons reckoned their own numbers. By doing this Germany had thrown off the yoke (in AD 9, when three legions were virtually annihilated), and yet it had only a river (Rhine) to defend it, not the Ocean. The Britons had their homeland, wives, and parents to fight for; the Romans only greed and self-indulgence. They would withdraw as the deified Julius had done if only the Britons matched the valour of their ancestors. They should not be put off by the outcome of one or two battles: the successful possess greater dash, but the unfortunate have the greater staying power. Now at last even the gods were taking pity on the Britons – they were keeping the Roman commander away and his army tied up in another island. The Britons themselves had already taken the most difficult step in getting down to making plans, and in a venture of that kind detection was more perilous than taking the plunge.

- 16 Inciting one another in turn by these and similar arguments, they all rose in arms under the leadership of Boudicca, a woman of royal descent – they do not in fact make any distinction of sex among their leaders. They sought out those soldiers scattered about in small forts, stormed fortified positions, and swooped upon the colony (Camulodunum) itself as being the fountainhead of their enslavement. In their anger and (the elation that sprang from) their victory there was no form of barbarous savagery they failed to indulge. Indeed, had not Paulinus quickly come to the rescue on receiving news of the uprising in the province, Britain would have been lost. In the event the favourable outcome of a single battle restored the province to its old submission. Many of the Britons, however, did not lay down their arms; their feelings of guilt at the rebellion and their particular fear of the governor kept them in a state of apprehension that for all his outstanding qualities in other respects he would take a high-handed attitude towards those who surrendered and, as a man who avenged every injury done to himself, would act with great harshness. Petronius Turpilianus was therefore sent, ostensibly because of his greater readiness to listen to pleas, and since he had not witnessed the crimes of the enemy, he would for that very reason be more lenient to those who repented their previous actions. He settled the earlier upheaval but ventured no further moves before handing over the province to Trebellius Maximus. Trebellius was even less inclined to action and had no military experience; instead he kept the province going by a rather easy-going administration. The natives too now learned to condone seductive vices, and the period of civil war (AD 68–69) provided a valid excuse for his inactivity. However, a serious situation developed as a result of mutiny, when the troops, accustomed as they were to campaigning, became restive through having nothing to do. Though he was able to avoid the wrath of his army by fleeing and going into hiding, Trebellius was despised and humiliated as a result. Thereafter he governed under sufferance with an agreement, as it were, being reached that gave the army licence to indulge itself, the commander his life; and so the mutiny came to an end without bloodshed. Vettius Bolanus likewise refrained from troubling Britain by enforcing discipline while the civil wars continued. There was the same lack of response to the enemy, the same insubordination in military quarters. The only difference was that Bolanus, through his innocuous character, had done nothing to stir up hatred against him, and so won affection if not obedience.
- 17 When, however, Vespasian recovered Britain along with the rest of the world, there was a run of great commanders, outstanding armies, and a slump in the hopes of the enemy. Petilius Cerialis at once instilled a feeling of terror by attacking the territory of the Brigantes, said to be the most populous of the whole province. There were numerous battles, some of them bloody, and a large part of Brigantian territory was either annexed or overrun. Cerialis indeed would have overshadowed the administration and repute of any other successor, but Julius Frontinus, a man who reached the pinnacle

of greatness that was then possible, shouldered and bore the burden. By force of arms he reduced the powerful and warlike tribe of the Silures, surmounting not only the valour of the enemy but also the difficulties of the terrain.

- 18 This then was the state of Britain and the twists and turns of warfare that Agricola discovered when, with summer already half over, he crossed over to it.⁸ The army was turning to thoughts of relaxation as though campaigning was over, the enemy to thoughts of what the opportunity offered.⁹ Shortly before the arrival of Agricola the tribe of the Ordovices had destroyed practically a whole cavalry wing that was stationed in their territory, and from this initial stroke the province was in a state of tension. Those (natives) who wanted war applauded the action and waited to see how the new governor would react. For his part, though summer was over and detachments were scattered throughout the province, though soldiers assumed campaigning for that year was over – all factors that would delay or hinder military activity – and most people thought it better simply to keep suspect districts under control, Agricola nevertheless decided to confront this dangerous situation. He drew together detachments from the legions and a small band of auxiliaries, and since the Ordovices did not dare to descend onto the plain, he marched his troops uphill – himself at their front, so as to inspire them with courage equal to his own by sharing their danger. Practically the whole tribe was cut down. Then, realising the necessity of following up the prestige gained and that the degree of terror his future actions would inspire depended on the outcome of his first campaign, he resolved to reduce the island of Mona (Anglesey), from the occupation of which, as mentioned above, Paulinus had been recalled by the revolt of all Britain.¹⁰ However, as is usual with hastily-formed schemes, there were no ships available, but by means of planning and determination the commander got his troops across. First, all the baggage was unloaded; then those auxiliaries in particular were chosen out who had knowledge of shallows and an inbred swimming ability, by which they could manage themselves, their arms and their horses. These Agricola sent in so unexpectedly that the enemy, who were expecting a fleet of ships and naval action, in their astonishment thought nothing was too arduous or invincible for men who approached warfare in such a fashion. For this reason they sued for peace and surrendered the island. Agricola for his part was hailed as a brilliant and great man; for on his arrival in the province, a time that others spend in pomp and a round of ceremonies, he had chosen hard work and danger. Nor did Agricola use his success for self-aggrandisement, or label as a campaign of victory his containment of those already conquered; he did not adorn his exploits with laurel-decked despatches. Yet his very reluctance to court fame served in fact to increase his fame when people considered how great his hopes for the future must be if he passed over in silence an achievement so great.

- 19 On the other hand Agricola well understood the feelings of the province and at the same time learned from the experience of others that there was little to

be gained from force of arms if this was followed by injustice. He therefore determined to eliminate the causes of war. Beginning with himself and his staff he first put his own house in order, a task that most governors find no less difficult than the administration of the province. He made no use of freedmen or slaves in the transaction of official business; he took no centurion or soldier onto his staff as a result of personal feelings, recommendation or petitions. Instead, he considered the best individuals would be most worthy of his trust. He knew everything, but did not always follow up what he knew; minor wrongdoing he pardoned; serious offences he dealt with severely. Nor was punishment his invariable reaction; more often than not he was content with repentance. He would rather appoint to official duties and administrative positions those not likely to go wrong than to punish them when they did so. He made the collection of the corn tax and tribute less onerous by spreading the burden fairly and cutting out schemes aimed at private gain, which proved a greater source of resentment than the tribute itself. For instance, the natives were forced to go through the farce of sitting outside locked granaries and actually buy grain, thereby discharging their obligations by the payment of money.¹¹ Alternatively, out-of-the-way routes and distant regions were stipulated, so that tribal areas made their deliveries to remote and inaccessible stations even though there were winter quarters close at hand.¹² As a result an obligation that should have been easy for all was turned into a source of profit for a few.

- 20 By checking these abuses immediately in his first year Agricola invested the idea of peace with an honourable reputation; this, through the negligence or arrogance of previous governors, had been feared no less than war. When, however, summer came, he collected his army and was constantly in the line of march, praising discipline and urging on stragglers. He himself chose the sites for camps, and he personally reconnoitred estuaries and forests; yet all the while he allowed the enemy no respite from the devastation of sudden attacks. Then, once he had inspired in them a sufficient degree of terror, he showed them the attractions of peace by applying clemency. In this way many tribes which up to that time had been independent handed over hostages and set aside their hostility. They were then surrounded by garrisons and forts with such systematic thoroughness that this was the first time a newly annexed part of Britain had submitted without suffering attacks (from its neighbours as a result).
- 21 The following winter was taken up with schemes to bring about improvement (in social conditions). So as to accustom the population, which was scattered, uncivilised, and for that reason prone to engage in warfare, to peaceful inactivity through the provision of amenities, Agricola gave private encouragement and official assistance to the construction of temples, forums and houses. This he did by praising the energetic and reproving those slow to act. In this way competition for his favour took the place of coercion. Further, he began to educate the sons of the nobility in the liberal arts and

expressed a preference for the natural abilities of the Britons over the trained skills of the Gauls. As a result, those who till recently rejected the Latin language, now aspired to fluency in it. Then again, our mode of dress came to be esteemed and the toga became a frequent sight. So, gradually they were diverted towards the enticements of vice: porticoes, baths, and elegant banquets. All this among the unsuspecting natives passed for civilisation, when in fact it was an aspect of their enslavement.¹³

- 22 The third year of campaigning opened up new tribes with attacks on nations as far as the Tanaus (Tay) – the name given to an estuary. As a result of the fear this engendered the enemy did not dare attack our army even though it was buffeted by severe storms. There was also time to spare for establishing forts. Those expert in such matters observed that no other general chose suitable sites with greater shrewdness. No fort established by Agricola was in fact ever taken by the enemy or abandoned either by agreement or by evacuation. Instead there were frequent sallies since they were rendered secure against a protracted siege by supplies sufficient to last a year. Winter there was in consequence not something to be feared, and each commander was able to be self-reliant. The enemy, in contrast, were baffled and despondent as a result, since they had generally been accustomed to counterbalance the losses sustained in summer with gains made during the winter, but now they were pushed back in summer and winter alike. Yet Agricola was never eager to claim for himself the achievements of others. Centurions and prefects found him an impartial witness to their deeds. According to some accounts he was excessively sharp in his reprimands. He could be as unpleasant towards those who were bad as he was affable towards the good. Yet he did not nurse hidden resentment, so one did not have cause to fear his silence. He thought it more honourable to give offence than harbour hatred.
- 23 The fourth summer was spent in securing the area already overrun and if the valour of the army and the glory of Rome allowed, a frontier was found within Britain itself. For the Clota and Bodotria (Clyde and Forth), carried far inland by the tides of seas opposite one another, are separated by only a narrow strip of land.¹⁴ This was now being securely held and the whole expanse of territory to the south was in our grip, with the enemy pushed back into almost another island.
- 24 In the fifth year of campaigning Agricola led a naval expedition, and in a number of successful battles he subdued tribes hitherto unknown. He also manned with troops the part of Britain that faces Ireland, in hope (of future action) rather than out of fear, since Ireland, situated as it is midway between Britain and Spain¹⁵ and conveniently placed also as regards the seas around Gaul, would link together the strongest part of the empire, to great mutual profit. The area of Ireland, compared with Britain, is small, but it is larger than the islands of the Mediterranean. Its soil and climate, the character and culture of its inhabitants are not much different from those of Britain, while the approaches to it and its harbours are known through trading contacts

and merchants. Agricola had in fact taken into his protection an Irish prince who had been driven from his home by rebellion, and was hanging on to him in the guise of friendship in case he might be useful. I have often heard Agricola say that Ireland could be conquered and held by a single legion and a fair-sized contingent of auxiliaries, and that the occupation of Ireland would be of advantage as regards Britain also, if Roman forces were everywhere and liberty removed, as it were, from sight.¹⁶

- 25 However, in the summer in which his sixth year of office began Agricola annexed tribes beyond the Bodotria (Forth), and since he feared a general rising on the part of the tribes further north and routes made dangerous by an enemy army, he reconnoitred the harbours with his fleet. This was in fact first used by Agricola as part of a fighting force and made a grand spectacle as it followed him. The war was being pushed forward simultaneously by land and sea, and often the infantry, cavalry and naval forces would share their rations and camaraderie in the same camp, each boasting of their individual exploits and escapades. With their soldierly bragging they would compare in turn the depths of the forests and ravines with the hazards of storms and seas, the conquest by one side of the land and enemy, that of Ocean by the other. The Britons too, as we learned from prisoners, were astonished by the sight of the fleet, as though, with the secret recesses of their sea opened up, their last refuge in defeat was closed against them. The natives of Caledonia turned to armed resistance on a large scale made larger by rumour, as usually happens when definite information is unavailable. They actually went so far as to attack forts and increased alarm by their challenging offensive. Under the guise of prudence some faint-hearts advised withdrawing beyond the Bodotria (Forth), and evacuation rather than expulsion. In the midst of all this Agricola learned that the enemy were about to attack in several columns, and so as not to be surrounded as a result of their superior numbers and knowledge of the terrain, he himself also advanced with his army divided into three sections.
- 26 When the enemy got to know of this, they suddenly changed their plans and making a concerted night-attack on the IX legion, as being the weakest, they cut down those on sentry duty and broke in upon the troops caught midway between sleep and confusion. The fighting was actually going on inside the camp itself when Agricola learned from scouts about the enemy's move. Following close on their tracks, he ordered the swiftest of his cavalry and infantry to hit the attackers in the rear and then all his forces to raise a shout. In the light of approaching dawn his standards gleamed out; the Britons were dismayed by having an enemy to their front and rear, while the soldiers of the IX recovered their spirits, and now certain of their safety they fought for the sake of glory. They even ventured a break-out, and there was fierce fighting within the very confines of the gateways until the enemy were driven off by the two Roman armies, one striving to give the impression they were coming to the rescue, the other that they did not need rescuing. But for the

marshes and woodland providing cover for the fleeing enemy, that victory would have brought the war to an end.¹⁷

- 27 The army, emboldened by first-hand knowledge of the battle or by its mere report, began to clamour that nothing could stand in the way of their valour, that they had to strike deeper into Caledonia and through battle after battle discover at last the furthest limits of Britain. Those who recently had been cautious and prudent were now eager and boastful – after the event. This is the least equitable aspect of war, that everyone claims credit for success, while failure is laid at the door of one man alone. The Britons, however, believing that they had been overcome not by valour but by the opportune action and skill of the general, abandoned none of their arrogance. Instead they put their fighting men under arms, moved their wives and children to safety and ratified the confederacy of their tribes by assemblies and sacred rites. And so the two forces separated with passions roused on both sides.
- 28 (During the same summer a cohort of Usipii within the Roman army revolted, seized three small warships and attempted to escape homewards. On their way they encountered resistance from the Britons when they landed to secure provisions, with the result that they were forced into cannibalism, but managed to sail round the north of Britain before becoming shipwrecked on the coast of the continent, captured as pirates, and eventually sold as slaves back into Roman hands.)
- 29 At the beginning of the (next) summer Agricola was struck by personal misfortune when he lost a son born the year before. He took the loss with neither the ostentatious fortitude that many brave men are prone to, nor the weeping and lamentations associated with women, and the war proved one source of relief to him in his sorrow. Accordingly, the fleet was sent ahead to plunder widely and thereby create great uncertainty and fear. Then, with the army marching light and augmented by the bravest of the Britons,¹⁸ tried and tested by long years of peace, Agricola reached Mons Graupius, which the enemy had already occupied. The Britons, in fact, undaunted by the outcome of the earlier battle, and with the prospect of revenge or enslavement before them, had at last learned that the danger facing them all must be repelled by united action. So, by means of envoys and treaties they had called out the fighting strength of all the tribes. Already more than 30,000 men under arms were visible, and still they came flocking in: all the young men and those whose age was still fresh and green, famous warriors, each wearing his decorations. At this point, among their many leaders a man outstanding by virtue of his valour and birth called Calgacus is said to have addressed the assembled multitude, clamouring as it was for battle, in the following terms:¹⁹
- 30–3 (Calgacus emphasises that there is now nowhere to run, that they are the last of the free Britons, while the Romans are insatiable in their greed and exploitation: ‘They create a desolation and call it peace’ [Chapter 30]. He shows how Boudicca almost destroyed the occupiers. The weakness of the

Britons has been consistently their disunity, but they have the strength of knowing they fight for their families and homes, whereas the Romans are a disparate conglomeration operating in an alien environment. Once defeated, they will find their so-called allies desert them.)

- 33–4 The speech was received enthusiastically with shouting and singing and a confused hubbub, as is the way with barbarians. Then bands of fighters began to move and there were flashes of light from arms as the boldest dashed forward. Amidst all of this the British line of battle was being drawn up. For his part Agricola considered it advisable to inspire his own troops still further, even though they were in high spirits and could scarcely be held back within their defences. He spoke as follows: (Agricola points out how much his troops have achieved already and the dangers of defeat now. He shows that the opposition are the fugitives of the Britons; the bravest have already fallen; now is the time to put the seal on Roman victories.)
- 35 Even as Agricola spoke the eagerness of his forces was clear and the end of his speech was followed by a great show of enthusiasm. At once they rushed to arms. Agricola drew up his men, inspired and eager to charge as they were, in the following order: the infantry auxiliaries, 8,000 in number, formed a strong centre to the line, while 3,000 cavalry were spread out on the wings. The legions were positioned in front of the (camp) rampart. In the event of victory the engagement would thus be a source of great distinction if no Roman blood were spilled, while in the event of a repulse the legions would provide reinforcement. The British line took up its position on higher ground in order to make an imposing show and inspire fear. As a result, while their front ranks were on the plain, the rest seemed to tower up in a dense mass on the rising slope. The intervening plain was filled with the noisy manoeuvring of the charioteers. Since the enemy possessed superiority of numbers, Agricola was afraid his forces would be engaged to their front and on the flanks at the same time. Accordingly, he opened up his ranks even though by doing this the line was likely to become excessively thin, and many urged him to bring up the legions. Being disposed to optimism and resolute in the face of difficulties, however, Agricola sent away his horse and took up his position on foot in front of the standards.
- 36 The first stage of the battle was fought at long range. The Britons displayed both determination and skill in parrying the Roman missiles with their huge swords or warding them off with their small shields, while they themselves rained great volleys of spears on us. Eventually, however, Agricola ordered four cohorts of Batavians and two of Tungrians to close to sword-point and hand-to-hand fighting, something drilled into them as a result of their long service, while it proved awkward for the enemy with their small shields and huge swords. Lacking points the British swords did not in fact permit close combat or fighting in confined spaces. So it was that the Batavians began to rain blow after blow, to strike them with their shield-bosses, stab them in the face, and advance their line up the hill. Once those posted on the plain had

been cut down, the other cohorts strove in eager rivalry to cut down the nearest of the enemy. The very speed of the Roman victory in fact left many Britons half-dead or even unhurt. In the meantime squadrons of cavalry engaged the (British) infantry, their chariots having fled, and although they initially caused panic at their attack, they were brought to a standstill by the solid ranks of the enemy and the unevenness of the ground. The engagement had anything but the appearance of a cavalry action with (our) men finding it difficult to hold their ground and at the same time being pushed forward by the weight of the horses. On many occasions too runaway chariots or terrified driverless horses, carried away by panic, tore into the lines in the flank or head-on.

- 37 The Britons occupying the hilltops, who had as yet taken no part in the battle, and being outside the action derided the small number of our forces, began gradually to descend and to envelop the rear of the winning side. But Agricola, who had feared that very development, threw against their advance four cavalry squadrons kept back for emergencies, routed them and put them to flight with a violence that matched the ferocity of the British charge. In this way the Britons' plan was turned against themselves; for on the general's command the squadrons moved from the front of the battle and attacked the enemy line in the rear. Then indeed the open ground presented a great and bloody spectacle of pursuit, wounds inflicted, captives taken, then slaughtered when others appeared. On the enemy side whole bands of men still in possession of their weapons turned tail before inferior numbers, while some willingly charged unarmed and sacrificed their lives. It all depended on the individual. Everywhere there were weapons, bodies, mangled limbs and blood-soaked earth, and yet on occasion too the vanquished displayed their valour and their wrath. For when they neared the woods, they rallied and, knowing the terrain, surrounded those who through lack of caution were in closest pursuit. Had not Agricola – busy everywhere – ordered strong cohorts of light infantry to scour the woods like a cordon, and where the woods were thicker, squads of dismounted troopers, and where more open, those mounted to do the same, something of a setback might have been sustained through excessive confidence. However, when the Britons saw the pursuit renewed by troops arrayed in solid ranks, they turned to flight, no longer as before in companies or giving thought for one another, but scattered and avoiding each other they made for far-off trackless wastes. Night and the glut of killing brought the pursuit to an end. Up to 10,000 enemy had been slain; of our own troops 360 fell, among whom was Aulus Atticus, a cohort commander, whose youthful enthusiasm and spirited horse had carried him into the enemy ranks.
- 38 For the victors it was a night marked by celebrations and plunder, while the Britons, scattered amidst the wailing of men and women alike, dragged away their wounded or called out to those who had escaped harm. They abandoned their homes and out of anger deliberately set them on fire; they chose out hiding places and immediately abandoned them; they took counsel of

sorts together, then acted independently of one another; at times their hearts were broken by the sight of their loved ones; more often it stirred them to anger. It was pretty certain indeed that some of them laid violent hands on their wives and children as if out of pity. The next day revealed more fully the face of victory: everywhere there was the silence of desolation, deserted hills, smoking houses in the distance; those sent out on reconnaissance met no one. They had been sent out in all directions, but it was clear that the tracks of those who fled led nowhere in particular and that the enemy were not regrouping anywhere. So, with summer now over and unable to extend the war further, Agricola led his army back to the territory of the Boresti. There he took delivery of hostages and gave instructions to the commander of the fleet to sail round Britain. Forces were assigned for this purpose and fear went before them. Agricola himself, after a slow march in order to overawe these new tribes with the very unhurried nature of his passage, placed his infantry and cavalry in winter quarters. At the same time, thanks to favourable weather and reports, the fleet reached Portus Trucculensis, from which it had set sail, and to which it returned intact, having skirted the adjacent shore of Britain.

39–46 (Tacitus alleges that the reaction of the emperor Domitian to Agricola's victory in Caledonia was a sham display of delight to cover the reality of his envy. Advancement to the more prestigious province of Syria was suggested, but was only to be offered if envoys sent to Agricola found him still in Britain. In the event they found him at sea in the Channel and immediately returned to Rome. After Britain Agricola retired into private life, refusing occasional offers of other commands, and it was in retirement that he eventually died.)

In contrast to the detail provided by Tacitus, our only other literary source, itself derived from the *Agricola*, provides little additional insight:

104. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXVI, 20, 1–3

In the mean time, war broke out again in Britain, and Gnaeus Julius Agricola overran all the enemy's territory there. He was the first Roman of whom we have any information to discover that Britain is surrounded by water. For some soldiers mutinied and, having murdered their centurions and a tribune, they took refuge in boats, put out to sea and sailed round the western part of Britain just as the current and winds took them. And they escaped detection on the other (eastern) side when they put in at the forts there. As a result of this, Agricola sent others to attempt the circumnavigation, and learned from them too that it was an island. These were the events in Britain and as a result Titus was given the title Imperator for the fifteenth time. Agricola, however, lived out the rest of his life in disgrace and want since he had accomplished more than was proper for a general. Finally he was murdered by Domitian for this very reason, though he had received triumphal honours from Titus.

Nor does Agricola figure much in extant inscriptions – only four survive:

105. Lead pipes from Chester (*RIB*, II.3, 2434.1–3)

In the ninth consulship of the Emperor Vespasian (AD 79), and the seventh of Titus Imperator, under Gnaeus Julius Agricola, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.

106. Fragmentary inscription from the Forum at St Albans AD 79 (extant portions italicised) (*JRS*, 46 [1956] pp. 146–7, cf. Burn p. 40)

For the Emperor Titus Caesar *Vespasian* Augustus, *son* of the deified *Vespasian*, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the ninth year of his holding Tribunician Power, fifteen times saluted Imperator, seven times Consul, and Consul *Designate* for the eighth time, Censor, Father of his Country, and for Caesar *Domitian*, son of the deified *Vespasian*, six times Consul, and Consul Designate for the seventh time, Leader of the Youth, and Member of *all* the Colleges of Priests, under Gnaeus Julius *Agricola*, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, the Municipium of *Verulamium* (set this up) *on completion* of the Basilica.

Agricola's concentration of his forces into a single line of advance north of the Forth–Clyde line betokens his realisation that the west-coast route was now impassable, and it may be that his reconnaissance to establish this lies behind the activities of Demetrius of Tarsus:

107. Plutarch (1st–2nd C. AD), *On the Disuse of Oracles*, 18 = *Moralia*, 419e

Demetrius said that of the islands around Britain many are remote and desolate, and that some of them are named after gods and heroes. He himself had sailed to the nearest of these remote isles on the instructions of the emperor for the purpose of enquiry and observation – an island which had only a few inhabitants, though these were all holy men and held inviolate by the Britons.

To this same Demetrius are probably to be assigned two Greek inscriptions from York:

108. *RIB*, I, 662–3

- (a) To the gods of the Governor's headquarters, Scribonius Demetrios (dedicated this).
- (b) To Ocean and Tethys, Demetrios.

In this same period of Agricola's governorship and perhaps as part of the continuing effort to Romanise the province (cf. *Agricola*, 21) Vespasian instituted the post of *Legatus Juridicus* or Law Officer.²⁰ Normally superintendence of legal affairs was one of the Governor's functions, but the conversion from Celtic to Roman law and the exigencies of rapid territorial expansion may have suggested the need for a deputy to oversee this aspect of administration. The first we know of was Gaius Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus; his successor is recorded in an inscription from Dalmatia:

109. *ILS*, 1015

To Gaius Octavius Tadius Tossianus Iulenus Priscus, Legate of the IV Legion Flavia, Legate of the III Legion Augusta, *Juridicus* (Law-Officer) of the province of Britain, Consular Governor of the province of Germania Superior, Consular Governor of the province of Syria, Proconsul of the province of Africa, Priest, Publius Mutilus Crispinus, son of Publius, of the Claudian voting-tribe, ordered this to be set up under his will for his good friend.

WITHDRAWAL AND CONSOLIDATION

The period between the departure of Agricola and the building of Hadrian's wall is marked by an almost total dearth of literary evidence. What there is, together with that provided by inscriptions and archaeology, suggests an early realisation that while four legions and attendant auxiliary units might be enough to conquer Scotland, they were not enough to hold it. The situation can only have been made worse by the withdrawal of the II Adiutrix for service in Domitian's Dacian war c. AD 87:

110. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Histories*, I, 2

Britain was conquered and immediately abandoned.

The result was an inevitable withdrawal from much of what Agricola had gained.¹ Inchtuthil, the most northerly of the legionary fortresses, was abandoned and Chester was now held by the XX Valeria Victrix:²

111. *RIB*, I, 501

Gaius Lovesius Cadarus, of the Papirian voting-tribe, from Emerita, soldier of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, aged twenty-five, with eight years' service. Frontinius Aquilo, his heir, had this set up.

At some stage before Domitian's death in AD 96, and doubtless for a more serious reason than that given by our source, a governor of Britain was put to death:

112. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Domitian*, 10

Domitian put to death many senators including a number of ex-consuls. Among them was ... Sallustius Lucullus, Governor of Britain, because he allowed a new type of spear to be called Lucullan.

At about the same time, the now-evacuated fortress at Lincoln was converted into a colony:³

113. From Mogontiacum (Mainz) (*CIL*, XIII, 6679)

Marcus Minicius Marcellinus, son of Marcus, of the Quirine voting-tribe,⁴ from Lindum (Lincoln), for the honour of the eagle of the XXII Legion Primigenia Pia Fidelis [...] the goddess Fortune.

Shortly afterwards, in the reign of Nerva (AD 96–8), Gloucester underwent the same transformation:

114. From Rome (*CIL*, VI, 3346)

To the spirits of the departed and Marcus Ulpus Quintus of Nervia Glevi (Gloucester), *frumentarius* (soldier responsible for corn supply) of the VI Legion Victrix, Calidus Quietus, his colleague, had this made for his respected, most dutiful and deserving brother.

The first decade of the second century AD in turn saw the strengthening of the remaining fortresses at Caerleon, Chester and York with stone defences:

115. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 330 restored)

For the Emperor Caesar Nerva Traja[n Augustus], conqueror of Germany, [son] of the deified [Nerva], Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) with [Tribunician] Power, Father of his Country, Consul for the third time (AD 100) the II Legion Augusta (built this).

116. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 464, extant portions italicised⁵)

The *Emperor* Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus, conqueror of Germany and Dacia, son of the deified Nerva [...]

117. From York (*RIB*, I, 665, restored)⁶

The Emperor Caesar Ne[rva Traj]an Augustus, conqueror of Ger[many and Dacia], son of the [deified N]erva, [Po]ntifex Maximus (High Priest) in the 12th year of his holding [Tribunician Po]wer (AD 108), six times saluted Imperator, [five times Consul, Father of his Country, built this gateway] through the agency of the IX Legion Hi[spana].

Consolidation, however, does not imply a total absence of native unrest, as a fleeting reference in Juvenal would seem to indicate:

118. Juvenal (early 2nd C. AD), *Satires*, IV, 126–7

Some king you will capture, or Arviragus will be hurled from his British chariot pole.⁷

THE HADRIANIC AND ANTONINE FRONTIERS

With the accession of Hadrian in AD 117, the abandonment of Trajan's expensive conquests in the east was soon matched by the consolidation of holdable frontiers in the west. In the case of Britain, the presence of the Emperor in the province in AD 122, the arrival of the VI Victrix, ostensibly to replace the IX Hispana, and the appointment of Platorius Nepos as Governor all provided the starting point for the construction of Hadrian's wall:

119. Scriptores Historiae Augustae (c. 4th C. AD), *Hadrian*, 5, 1–2 and 11, 2

- 5 When he took over the government, Hadrian immediately reverted to an earlier policy, and devoted his energies to maintaining peace throughout the world. For at one and the same time those peoples Trajan had subjugated were in revolt, the Moors started making attacks, the Sarmatae were waging war, the Britons could not be kept under Roman control ...
- 11 ... And so, having reformed the army in the manner of a king, Hadrian set out for Britain. There he corrected many faults and was the first to build a wall, 80 miles long, to separate the Romans and barbarians.¹

As often, the visit by the Emperor was marked by the minting of commemorative coins:

120. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, II, p. 453, no. 882)



Obverse

Hadrianus Aug(ustus) Cos (Consul) III (times, i.e. AD 134–8) P(ater) P(atriae)
(Father of his Country)

Reverse

Adventui Aug(usti) Britanniae (For the arrival of the Emperor in Britain).
S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

121. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, II, p. 458, no. 912)



Obverse

As 120

Reverse

Exer(citus) Britanni(cus) (British Army) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of
the Senate)

Similarly, as a declaration of Roman order, came further issues showing Britannia
subdued:

122. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, II, p. 447, no. 845)



Obverse

As 120

Reverse

Britannia S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

Supplementing the admittedly bare literary account and numismatic evidence are inscriptions from the wall itself, recording not only the pattern of building but also the builders:

123. From near Jarrow (*RIB*, I, 1051 restored)

Son of all the [deified emperors, the Emperor Caesar Trajan] Hadr[ian Augustus], after the necessity of [kee]ping [the empire within its limits had been laid on him] by [div]ine co[mmand] [...] thrice Consul [...] once [the barbarians] had been scattered [and] the province of Britain [recovered], ad[ded a frontier between] either [shore of] O[cean for 80 miles]. The army [of the] pr[ovince built the wall] under the direction [of Aulus Platorius Nepos, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.]

124. From Benwell (*RIB*, I, 1340 restored)

For the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus a detachment of the British F[leet] (built this) under Aulus Platorius N[epos], Pro-P[raetorian L]egate of Augustus.²

**125. From the Benwell to Rudchester section
(*RIB*, I, 1374)**

The century of Julius Proculus (built this).

126. From Halton Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1427, restored)

For the Emperor Caesar T[rajan Hadrian] Augustus the VI Legion V[ictrix Pia Fidelis] (built this) under Aulus Platorius N[epos], Pro-[Praetorian] Legate of Augustus.

127. From Halton Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1428)

The II Legion Augusta built this.

128. From the central sector: Milecastle 38 (*RIB*, I, 1638)

The II Legion Augusta of the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus (built this) under Aulus Platorius Nepos, Pro-Praetorian Legate.³

The actual construction of the wall, however, proved no easy undertaking and was eventually to involve radical alterations in both design and method of manning. Dedications of building were still going on after 128 when Hadrian received the title 'Father of his Country':⁴

129. From Great Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1736)

For the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, Father of his Country.

Evidence, albeit fragmentary, also suggests changes in the disposition of forts continuing under Julius Severus in the early 130s prior to his move to Judaea in order to suppress the Bar Kochba revolt.⁵

130. From Carrawburgh (*RIB*, I, 1550 restored)

[... Se]verus, [Pro-P]raetorian Legate [of Augustus], the 1st Cohort of Aquit-
[anians] built this [under ...] Nepos the [Pr]efect.

131. Epitome of Dio Cassius LXIX, 13, 2, AD 132–3

Then indeed Hadrian sent against them (the Jews) the best of his generals. The first of these was Julius Severus, despatched from Britain where he was governor.⁶

Even later, in AD 136–8, work was still in progress at sites such as Carvoran:

132. *RIB*, I, 1778

To the Emperor's Fortune for the welfare of Lucius Aelius Caesar, Titus Flavius Secundus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Hamian archers, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow as the result of a vision.⁷

For reasons that remain uncertain⁸ the accession of Antoninus Pius in AD 138 brought with it a fresh Roman advance into southern Scotland and the establishment of a new frontier between the Forth and the Clyde:

**133. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (c. 4th C. AD),
Antoninus Pius, 5, 4**

Antoninus waged a large number of wars through his governors. Through the governor Lollius Urbicus he defeated the Britons, and having driven back the barbarians, he built another wall, this time of turf.

As preparation for the push northwards, Corbridge underwent a new building programme to bring it back into commission as a supply depot:

134. *RIB*, I, 1147 (restored)

For [the Emperor] Titus Aelius Antoninus [Au]gustus Pius, Consul for the second time, [under] the command of Quintus Lollius Urbicus, Pro-Praetorian [Legate] of [A]ugustus, the II Legion Augusta built this.

As in the case of the Hadrianic frontier, the process of wall-building is recorded by inscriptions:

135. From Bridgeness (*RIB*, I, 2139)

For the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country, the II Legion Augusta built this for 4,652 paces.

136. From Old Kilpatrick (*RIB*, I, 2205)

For the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus, Father of his Country, a detachment of the VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis (carried out) the construction of the rampart for 4,141 feet.

137. From Castlehill (*RIB*, I, 2198)

For the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country, a detachment of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix built this for 3,000 feet.

138. From Rough Castle (*RIB*, I, 2145 restored)

[For the Emperor Ca]esar Titus [Aelius] Hadrianus [Anto]ninus Augustus [Pius], Father of his Country, the 6th Cohort of [Ner]vii built this headquarters-building.

139. From Bar Hill (*RIB*, I, 2170 restored)

For the E[mperor Cae]sar Titus Aelius [Hadrianus An]toninus Au[gustus Pius, Father of his Country], the 1st Cohort of B[aetasii], Roman [Citizens] for their val[our and lo]yalty (set this up).

140. From Balmuildy (*RIB*, I, 2191 restored)

[For the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Father] of his Country, the II Legion Au[gusta built this under] Quintus Lollius Ur[bicus], Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.

141. Milestone from Ingilston (PSAS, 13 [1983], pp. 379–85, restored)

For the E[mp]eror Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Anto[ninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country, 2/3 times Consul⁹ [two lines] the 1st [Co]hort of Cugerni (set this up) [...] miles from [Tri]montium.

Similarly too, Antoninus celebrated his advance by issuing commemorative coins showing Britannia and Victory, AD 143–4.

142. Bronze sestertii (RIC, III, p. 121, no. 745; p. 119, no. 719)



1



2

1. *Reverse*

Imperator II (times) Britannia S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

2. *Reverse*

Imperator II (times) Britan(nia) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

The appearance of fresh issues of this type dated to the mid-150s, however, suggests renewed trouble and further Roman victories:

143. Bronze dupondius, AD 154–5 (RIC, III, p. 142, no. 930)



Reverse

Britannia Cos (Consul) IIII (times) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

It may indeed be to this period that Pausanias' passing reference to a rising among the Brigantes belongs:

144. Pausanias (mid-2nd C. AD), *Description of Greece*, VIII (Arcadia) 43, 3–4

Antoninus never willingly involved the Romans in war ... he also removed much of the territory of the Brigantes in Britain because they had embarked upon an armed invasion of the region of Genounia, which was subject to the Romans.¹⁰

At all events, the unrest seems to have been serious enough to necessitate reinforcements from the armies in Germany to bolster all three legions in Britain, now under a new governor, Julius Verus:

145. From Newcastle (*RIB*, I, 1322)

To the Emperor Antoninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country, the detachment contributed from the two German provinces for the II Legion Augusta, the VI Legion Victrix and the XX Legion Valeria Victrix (set this up) under Julius Verus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.¹¹

It is under Verus too that we find rebuilding at stations like Birrens dated to AD 157–8:

146. *RIB*, I, 2110 (restored)

For the Emperor Caesar Titus A[elius H]adrianus An[to]ninus Augustus [Pius, Po]ntifex Maximus (High Priest), in the twenty-first year of his holding [Tr]ibunician Power (AD 157–58), four times Consul, the 2nd Cohort of [Tung]rians, 1,000-strong, part-mounted, citizens with Latin Rights, (set this up) under Ju[lius Verus], Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.

The occupation of southern Scotland undertaken by Antoninus Pius seems from the evidence to have created more problems than it solved, and in 158 there was rebuilding also on Hadrian's Wall. Though precise details and chronology are still a matter of debate, it would seem that the idea of a temporary withdrawal from the Antonine Wall, followed by a second period of occupation, once accepted as established fact, can no longer be maintained without question.¹²

147. From near Heddou-on-the-Wall (*RIB*, I, 1389)

The VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis rebuilt this in the consulship of Tertullus and Sacerdos (AD 158).

For certain, however, the early years of Marcus Aurelius' reign (AD 161–80) show signs of continuing problems:

**148. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (c. 4th C. AD),
Marcus Antoninus (Aurelius), 8, 7**

War was threatening in Britain too, and the Chatti had invaded Germany and Raetia. Against the Britons was sent Calpurnius Agricola (AD 163), against the Chatti Aufidius Victorinus.

As in the days of Lollius Urbicus, Corbridge saw renewed building activity by the legions:

149. *RIB*, I, 1137

To the Unconquered Sun-god, a detachment of the VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis (set this up) under the command of Sextus Calpurnius Agricola, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.

That the problems faced by the province were becoming chronic is suggested by a hint of further trouble at the very end of the decade:

150. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Marcus Antoninus (Aurelius)*, 22, 1

In addition war was threatening in Parthia and Britain.

The mid-170s in turn saw the arrival in Britain of new cavalry contingents drafted into the Roman army as part of Marcus Aurelius' settlement of his campaign across the Danube. In this case, however, their presence in the province seems to have been designed more to isolate them from their homeland than to counter native unrest:

151. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXI, 16, 2

As their contribution to the alliance the Iazyges immediately provided him (Marcus Aurelius) with 8,000 cavalry, 5,500 of whom he sent to Britain.

As if to provide a foretaste of the disastrous reign of Commodus, the early months of his assuming sole imperial power in AD 180 saw northern Britain convulsed by a major penetration from beyond the frontier. The situation clearly demanded a man of proven worth:

152. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXII, 8

Commodus also had a number of wars against the barbarians beyond Dacia in which both Albinus and Niger, who later fought against the emperor Severus, distinguished themselves. The greatest war, however, was in Britain. For the tribes in the island crossed the wall¹³ that separated them from the Roman army and did a great amount of damage, even cutting down a general together with his troops. Commodus therefore became alarmed and sent Ulpius Marcellus¹⁴ against them. Marcellus was a temperate and frugal man and when on active service lived like a soldier in the matter of what he ate and his conduct in general, but he was becoming haughty and arrogant. He was totally and patently incorruptible, but in his character not the least bit pleasant or kindly. He could go without sleep more than any other general, and since he wanted those who accompanied him to remain awake and alert, he used to write orders on twelve tablets – the kind made out of limewood – pretty well every evening, and he would order someone to take them to this or that person at various times so that being convinced their commander was awake, they might not themselves get their fill of sleep. He had besides a natural ability to resist sleep, and this he further developed through fasting. In general he never took his fill of food, and so as not to fill himself up even with bread, he used to send to Rome for it – not because he was unable to eat the local variety, but so that he would not be able to eat any more of it than was absolutely necessary because of its staleness, since he had bad gums and they bled easily because of the bread's dryness. So he took care to exaggerate this (resistance to sleep) in order to gain the greatest possible reputation for being able to stay awake. Such was the character of Marcellus, and he inflicted major defeats on the barbarians in Britain. Later, when he was on the point of being put to death by Commodus because of his singular abilities, he was nevertheless spared.

By AD 184, sufficient Roman victories had been won to justify the issue of coins advertising the fact:

153. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, III, p. 418, no. 451)



Reverse

P(ontifex) M(aximus) (High Priest) Tr(ibunicia) P(otestas) (Tribunician Power) X (times, AD 184–85) Imp(erator) VII (times) Cos (Consul) IIII (times) P(ater) P(atriciae) (Father of his Country) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate) Vic(toria) Brit(annica) (Victory in Britain)

154. Bronze medallion (*Grueber*, no. 12)



Obverse

M(arcus) Commodus Antoninus Aug(ustus) Pius Brit(annicus)

Reverse

Britannia. P(ontifex) M(aximus) (High Priest) Tr(ibunicia) P(otestas) (Tribunician Power) X (times) Imp(erator) VII (times) Cos (Consul) IIII (times) P(ater) P(atriciae) (Father of his Country)

For all his military expertise, however, Marcellus' overbearing nature was hardly calculated to make him a popular commander, and his unsociable personal idiosyncrasies together with increasingly erratic policies emanating from Rome served only to put the army in Britain into a rebellious mood. When Commodus' Praetorian Prefect, Perennis, began replacing senatorial legionary commanders with men of the lower equestrian rank the situation reached boiling point:

**155. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (c. 4th C. AD),
Commodus, 6, 1–2**

At this time, Perennis attributed to his own son the successes gained in Sarmatia by other generals. In the war in Britain, however, this same Perennis who wielded so much power removed commanders of senatorial rank and placed in charge of the soldiers men of equestrian rank.

156. *Epitome of Dio Cassius*, LXXII, 9

It came about that Perennis, who had command of the Praetorian guard after Paternus, was put to death as a result of a mutiny among the troops. Since Commodus had given himself over to chariot races and riotous living and performed practically none of the functions of government, Perennis was forced to take charge not only of military affairs but everything else as well, and thus to run the state. For this reason, whenever the troops were faced by something not to their liking, they laid the blame on Perennis, and were angry with him. The troops in Britain chose Priscus, a (legionary) Legate, as Emperor, but he refused saying ‘I am as much an emperor as you are soldiers.’ The officers in Britain, therefore, having been reprimanded for their insubordination – they did not in fact settle down until Pertinax checked them – chose out 1,500 javelin men from their ranks and sent them to Italy. As they drew close to Rome without encountering any resistance, Commodus met them and asked ‘What is the meaning of this, my comrades in arms? Why are you here?’ They replied ‘We have come because Perennis is plotting against you in order to make his son Emperor’, and Commodus believed them, especially as they were supported by Cleander who had a burning hatred of Perennis because he had thwarted his every design. So Commodus handed over the Praetorian Prefect to the very troops of whom he was commander, and did not in fact have the courage to rebuff 1,500 men, though he had many times that number of Praetorian guards. They then tortured and butchered Perennis, and his wife, sister, and two sons were also put to death.

The lesson to be learned from the fall of Perennis in AD 185 as a result of direct intervention by part of a provincial army was evidently not lost on Commodus. To restore the forces in Britain to a proper appreciation of their duties, he appointed as Governor Helvius Pertinax, a man with a well-established reputation for strict discipline. Pertinax’s methods, however, seem to have been sadly out of step with the needs of the moment:

157. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Pertinax*, 3, 5–10

Following the execution of Perennis, Commodus made amends to Pertinax and asked him in a letter to set out for Britain. Having done this, he prevented the

troops there from fomenting revolt, though they wanted to set up someone – more specifically Pertinax himself – as Emperor. Then Pertinax gained a reputation for malevolence because he was said to have brought before Commodus charges that Antistius Burrus and Arrius Antoninus were aspiring to the throne. In addition, he put down revolts against himself in Britain and indeed came into very great danger, being almost killed in a mutiny involving a legion and actually left among the dead. This Pertinax punished with signal severity, but eventually he asked to be relieved of his post as Governor, saying that the legions were hostile to him on account of his maintenance of discipline.

ALBINUS AND THE SEVERAN DYNASTY

With the reign of Commodus prematurely terminated by the Emperor's assassination in AD 192, it was in fact to Pertinax that Rome now looked for the restoration of stable government. His efforts to restore discipline to the capital, however, were to prove as unsuccessful as his governorship of Britain had been, and within months he too fell victim to the same Praetorian guards who had murdered Commodus and who were now prepared to sell the throne to the highest bidder. Yet, while the guards might be content to invest Didius Julianus with imperial honours, they failed to realise that far more powerful figures were now poised at the head of provincial armies to advance their own claims:

158. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXIII, 14, 3

At that time three men, each in command of three legions of citizens and numerous other foreign troops, took control of affairs: Severus, Niger, and Albinus, the last of these being in command of Britain, Severus of Pannonia, and Niger of Syria.

Taking advantage of his geographical proximity to the heart of the empire Severus was able to steal a march on those who were to be his rivals, seize Italy, and by offering Albinus the rank of Caesar, implying a division of power and eventual succession, to leave his hands free for the struggle with Niger:

159. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXIII, 15, 1-2

Of the three commanders I have mentioned the shrewdest was Severus. He realised that after Julianus had been deposed the three of them would come into conflict with one another and fight for the empire, and he decided to win over the one who was nearer to him. For this reason he sent Albinus a letter through someone he trusted appointing him Caesar,¹ for he realised he would get nowhere with Niger who had set his sights high as a result of being the people's choice. Albinus, therefore, remained where he was in the belief that he would

share the government with Severus, and Severus, after winning over all Europe with the exception of Byzantium, hastened on to Rome.

Severus' ploy against Albinus, the success of which some in antiquity attributed to the latter's naive conceit, seems also to have been designed to mollify senatorial opinion:

160. Herodian (3rd C. AD), II, 15, 1–5

Severus made careful preparations for the war (against Niger), but being a cautious and wary individual he had his suspicions about the forces in Britain. These were large and powerful, and constituted very effective fighters. In command of them was Albinus, a man who by birth belonged to the nobility that made up the Senate, and who had been brought up amidst wealth and inherited luxury. Severus therefore wanted to trick him into giving him his support. He was concerned in fact that with such inducements to aim for the throne and relying on his wealth, family ties, the strength of his army and his reputation among the Romans, Albinus might make a bid for power and occupy Rome, which was no great distance away, while Severus had his hands full in the east. So, using as bait the semblance of doing him honour, Severus got him on his hook. Albinus was in any case a conceited and rather naive character who believed the many promises Severus made in his letters. He appointed him Caesar, thereby anticipating Albinus' hopes and desires with a share of power, and he sent him a most friendly letter, earnestly entreating him to devote himself to the welfare of the empire. Severus claimed he needed a man of nobility such as Albinus, one still in the prime of life, since he himself was old, afflicted with gout, and his sons as yet still very young. Albinus believed all this and gladly accepted the honour, delighted to have achieved his ambition without a fight or running any risks. Severus also brought the matter up in the Senate so as to reinforce Albinus' loyalty, sanctioned the striking of coins of Albinus, and by the erection of statues and other honours confirmed the favour conferred. When, therefore, by his cunning Severus had secured his position as far as Albinus was concerned and there was nothing to fear from Britain, he moved against Niger accompanied by the whole Illyrian army in the belief that everything was arranged to the advantage of his own rule.

A dedication for the safety of Severus and Albinus:

161. From Rome (*ILS*, 414, restored)

To the holy goddess Fortune of the Home, Lucius Valerius Frontinus, Centurion of the 2nd Cohort of the Watch, set up this altar at his own expense along with

his family for the safe return of Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus [and Decimus Clodius] Septim[ius Albinus Caesar].

By AD 196, however, it was becoming clear that neither Severus nor Albinus any longer believed in the permanence of their previous arrangement:

162. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXV, 4, 1

Before Severus could draw breath after his war with the barbarians, he was once more involved in civil war against his Caesar, Albinus. For now that he was rid of Niger and had arranged matters in that quarter as he wanted them, Severus no longer accorded him the rank of Caesar. Albinus on the other hand sought the dignity of being Emperor.

Certainly, hints of a Senate-based conspiracy to replace him seem to have prompted Severus to make the first move:

163. Herodian (3rd C. AD), III, 5, 2–8

Once Niger had been disposed of Albinus was considered a superfluous annoyance. Severus also received reports that he was revelling in the title of Caesar in a way more reminiscent of an emperor, and that many people, in particular the more prominent members of the Senate, were sending him personal letters urging him to come to Rome while Severus was absent and otherwise occupied. The aristocracy in fact preferred to have him on the throne since he was sprung from a long line of noble ancestors and was said to possess a pleasant temperament. On learning this Severus decided against an immediate and open breach or a declaration of war against him, since Albinus had given no valid cause (for such a move). Instead he decided to try to get rid of him, if at all possible, by underhand deception. He therefore sent for the most trustworthy of his usual imperial dispatch-carriers and gave them instructions to hand over their dispatches in public, should they be admitted into Albinus' presence, and then to ask him to withdraw in order to hear in greater privacy some secret instructions. If Albinus agreed, they were suddenly to attack and kill him while unprotected by his bodyguards. Severus also gave them poisonous drugs so that given the opportunity they might prevail upon some of Albinus' cooks or wineservers to administer them in secret and despite the suspicions of Albinus' advisers, who warned him to be on his guard against a man given to treachery and an expert at scheming. Severus' actions against Niger's generals had in fact blackened his character, since he had forced them through their children to betray Niger's cause, as has already been mentioned. Once, however, he had made full use of their services and had achieved his aims, Severus did away with them together

with their children. It was these actions most of all that made plain the treacherous nature of Severus' character. As a result, Albinus surrounded himself with a larger bodyguard and none of Severus' messengers came near him without first taking off the swords they wore as soldiers and being searched for weapons concealed beneath their clothes. So it was that Severus' messengers arrived and handed over the dispatches in public. Then they asked him to withdraw in order to hear certain secret matters. Albinus, however, became suspicious, ordered their arrest, and by putting them to the torture one at a time, discovered the whole plot. The men were punished, and Albinus himself began preparations against an enemy who had more or less shown his hand.²

With the failure of the assassination attempt, Severus was now thrown back into open warfare, though first he prevailed upon the Senate to legitimise the conflict by declaring Albinus a public enemy:

164. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Severus, 10, 1–2*

As Severus was returning to Rome after the civil war with Niger, he received news of another civil war, this time against Clodius Albinus, who had revolted in Gaul ... He therefore had Albinus immediately declared an enemy of the state together with those who wrote to Albinus in favourable terms and received similar replies.³

In this more open phase of hostilities, Albinus is described as being caught curiously unprepared, though this seems not to have hindered his move into Gaul to prepare his positions and await the struggle to come:

165. *Herodian (3rd C. AD), III, 7, 1*

When it was reported to Albinus as he languished in his life of luxury that Severus was wasting no time and would soon be upon him, he was thrown into a state of panic. Crossing from Britain to Gaul opposite he there established his base and sent to all the neighbouring provinces ordering their governors to send him money and supplies for his army. Some complied and sent supplies – a fatal mistake since they were later punished for it. Those, however, who did not comply were saved more by luck than by sound judgement, since it was the chance outcome of war that decided the soundness of each man's judgement.

In the initial skirmishes with Severan forces, Albinus was able to gain the upper hand, but in the decisive engagement outside Lyons against Severus himself Albinus met his Waterloo:

166. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXV, 6–7

- 6 The struggle between Severus and Albinus at Lyons took place as follows. On each side were 150,000 troops, and since this was the final showdown, both commanders were present in the conflict, though Severus had been at none of the other battles. Albinus was superior in terms of family background and education, but in warfare Severus was the better man and a shrewd commander. Notwithstanding this Albinus had managed to defeat Lupus, one of Severus' generals, in an earlier battle and had slain many of the troops with him. The present conflict, however, had many phases and changes of fortune. So, for instance, Albinus' left wing was defeated and fell back on their defences. Severus' troops, pursuing them, burst in with them and began slaughtering them and plundering their tents. In the meantime, however, those troops of Albinus stationed on the right wing advanced as far as the concealed trenches and the pits covered with a layer of earth they had in front of them, and threw their javelins at a distance. Further than this they did not go; instead they turned back as if afraid, so as to draw their adversaries in pursuit after them. And this is what happened. Severus' men, irritated by their brief advance and despising them for their flight after so short a distance, rushed at them as though all the ground between them was passable, but then met with a dreadful disaster when they came to the trenches. Straight away the surface covering caved in and the soldiers in the front rank fell into the pits. Those behind crashed into them, lost their footing, and likewise fell in. The rest drew back in fear, but because of their sudden about-turn they themselves stumbled, and threw those to their rear into a state of confusion, forcing them as a result into a deep ravine. There was a great loss of life involving men and horses both among these latter and those who fell into the trenches. In the midst of all this tumult those who were between the ravine and the trenches were also being cut down by missiles and arrows. When Severus saw this, he came to their rescue with his Praetorian Guard, but far from helping them, he almost destroyed the Praetorians as well, and put himself in danger by losing his horse. When he saw all his troops in retreat, he tore off his cloak, drew his sword, and rushed in among his fleeing men to make them turn back out of shame, or to perish with them himself. Some at least did halt when they saw him like this, and did turn back. In doing so, however, they suddenly came face to face with those following them, and many of these they cut down in the belief that they were Albinus' forces, though they did also rout all those who were in fact pursuing them. At this point the cavalry under Laetus came up from the flank and completed the task ...
- 7 In this way Severus secured his victory, but Roman power suffered a serious reversal, since countless men had fallen on both sides ... Albinus took refuge in a house situated beside the Rhone, and when he saw the whole place was surrounded, he committed suicide.⁴

Following his victory in AD 197, one of Severus' first reported acts towards Britain was the division of the province into two:

167. Herodian, III, 8, 2

Having settled matters in Britain, Severus divided control of the province into two commands.

Doubt, however, surrounds the question of whether the measure underwent immediate implementation.⁵ Herodian's later description of the disturbances there (III, 14, 1, §174) suggests in fact a continuing unified command. Upon recovery of Britain, though, the newly appointed Governor, Virius Lupus, straight away initiated a programme of fort rebuilding in the region of the Pennines, suggesting that it was here the main danger to stability for the moment lay:

168. From Ilkley (*RIB*, I, 637)

The Emperor Severus Augustus and Antoninus Caesar⁶ (Caracalla) destined (to be emperor) restored this under the direction of Virius Lupus, their Pro-Praetorian Legate.

169. From Brough-under-Stainmore (*RIB*, I, 757, restored)

For the Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius P[ertin]ax Augustus and [Marcus Aurelius Anto]ninus Caesar (Caracalla) [...] in the consulship of [Later]a[nus] and R[uf]inus (AD 197).

170. From Bowes (*RIB*, I, 730)

To the goddess Fortune, Virius Lupus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, restored this bathhouse destroyed by fire for the 1st Cohort of Thracians, under the direction of Valerius Fronto, Commander of the cavalry squadron of Vettones.

At the same time, however, came rumblings of potential trouble from beyond the northern frontier:

171. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXV, 5, 4

Since the Caledonians did not remain true to their promises and had made preparations to assist the Maeatae,⁷ and since at the time Severus was embroiled

in war elsewhere, Lupus was forced to buy peace from the Maeatae for a large sum, and in exchange recovered a few captives.⁸

By AD 206–7 the Governor was Alfenus Senecio, and the main process of fort restoration had shifted to the region of Hadrian's wall:

172. From Birdoswald (*RIB*, I, 1909, restored)

For the Emperor-Caesars Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the Augusti, [and for Publius Septimius Geta, Most Noble Caesar] the 1st Aelian Cohort of Dacians and 1st Cohort of Thracians, Roman Citizens, built this granary under Alfenus Senecio, Consular Governor, through the agency of the Tribune Aurelius Julianus.

173. From Risingham (*RIB*, I, 1234, restored)

[For the Emperor-Caesars Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax, conqueror of Arabia, Adi]abene, most great conqueror of Parthia, thrice Consul, and for Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius, twice Consul, Augusti, [and for Publius Septimius Geta, Noble Caesar], the 1st Cohort of Vangiones 1,000-strong, part-mounted, restored from ground-level this gate and its walls which had collapsed through age, by order of His Excellency Alfenus Senecio, Consular Governor, and under the direction of Oclatinus Adventus,⁹ Procurator of our Emperors, together with the Tribune Aemilius Salvianus.

Unlike the Pennine restorations, however, that at Risingham was demonstrably necessitated by the natural deterioration of age rather than enemy action. Noteworthy, though, is the part played by the Procurator, and behind Senecio's appeal for direct imperial intervention may well be a threat or even the reality of serious trouble:

174. Herodian (3rd C. AD), III, 14, 1

Severus was becoming disturbed by the lifestyle of his sons and their unseemly enthusiasm for public spectacles, when the Governor of Britain sent word to him that the barbarians were in revolt and that they were overrunning the country, looting it and causing widespread havoc. He therefore requested additional forces to protect the place or a visitation by the Emperor.

Severus' favourable reaction to the invitation despite his advanced years and failing health is regarded by Dio not only as an attempt to remove his sons from

their dissolute life in Rome but also as a means of maintaining the efficiency of the army:

175. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXVI, 11, 1

Seeing that his sons were becoming unruly and the army slack through inactivity, Severus made an expedition to Britain though he knew he would not return.

To these reasons Herodian adds the Emperor's continuing desire for military glory:

176. Herodian, III, 14, 2–3

Severus was pleased to hear this, for besides being a natural lover of glory, he wanted to raise some victory-trophies at the expense of the Britons to add to the victories and titles won in the east and north. Then again, he wanted to get his sons away from Rome so that they might come to their senses amidst the disciplined life of the army, once they were away from the luxury and high life of Rome. For this reason he announced the expedition to Britain, even though he was by now an old man and suffering from gout. When it came to enthusiasm, however, he had more spirit than any young man. Most of the travelling he did being carried in a litter, but he never stopped to rest for any length of time, and he completed the journey in the company of his sons sooner than expected and faster than news of him could spread.

In AD 208, Severus arrived in Britain together with his family and court. After initial preparations the campaign could get under way:

177. Herodian, III, 14, 3–10

Crossing Ocean Severus set foot in Britain. There he mustered troops from all parts, and having raised a powerful army, he made ready for the war. Alarmed by the unexpected arrival of the Emperor and hearing about the vast force that had been assembled against them, the Britons sent envoys to discuss peace terms and wished to explain away their past misdeeds. Severus, however, wanted to prolong matters so as to avoid a speedy return to Rome and also to secure a victory and title at the Britons' expense. He therefore dismissed their envoys empty-handed and made ready for the war. In particular he attempted to divide up the marshy areas with causeways (or bridges) so that advancing in safety his troops could effect an easy and rapid passage of these regions and fight from a firm and steady base ... Against this background, therefore, Severus got ready everything likely to be of use to the Roman army and to damage or impede the attacks of the barbarians. When it seemed that sufficient preparations for the

war had been made, he left Geta, the younger of his sons, in that part of the province under Roman control, to dispense justice and to carry on the civil administration of the empire. To this end he provided him with a council made up of his older friends. Antoninus (Caracalla) he took with him and he pressed on against the barbarians. Once the army had crossed the rivers and earthworks on the frontier of the Roman empire, there were frequent encounters and skirmishes with the enemy in which they were put to flight. However, it was easy for them to escape and to disappear into the woods and marshes because of their knowledge of the terrain, but all this hampered the Romans and dragged out the war considerably.

That Severus' penetration of Scotland was no easy undertaking, however, is clear from other sources:

178. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXVI, 13

Wishing therefore to subdue the whole of Britain, Severus invaded Caledonia, and as he passed through it, he experienced untold difficulties in cutting down the forests, levelling the high ground, filling in the swamps, and bridging the rivers. He fought no battles nor did he see any enemy drawn up for battle. Instead they deliberately put sheep and cattle in the Romans' way for the soldiers to seize, so that they might be lured on further still and thus be worn out. In fact the Romans suffered great hardships because of the water, and any stragglers became a prey to ambush. Then, unable to go on, they would be killed by their own men so they might not fall into enemy hands. As a result as many as 50,000 died in all. However, Severus did not give up until he neared the furthest point of the island where in particular he observed with great accuracy the change in the sun's motion and the length of days and nights in both summer and winter. And so, having been conveyed through the whole of enemy territory as it were – for he actually was carried in a covered litter for much of the time on account of his infirmity – he returned to friendly territory once he had forced the Britons to come to terms whereby they ceded a large sector of their land.

Despite the ostensible victories of the first year's campaign, the following year, AD 210, saw a renewal of native resistance and a vicious Roman response, which seems to have served to widen the conflict:

179. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXVI, 15, 1–2

When the inhabitants of the island rose again in rebellion, Severus called together his troops and ordered them to invade their territory and to kill everyone they found, and he quoted these lines: 'Let no one escape total destruction at our hands, not even the child carried in its mother's womb, if it be male; let it

not escape total destruction.’ When this had been done and the Caledonians had joined the Macatae in revolt, Severus prepared to make war on them in person, and while he was engaged in this he was carried off by illness on the 4th of February (AD 211)¹⁰ not without a certain amount of help it is said from Antoninus (Caracalla). Before his death he is said to have told his sons the following – I give the actual words spoken without any embellishment: ‘Live in harmony with one another; enrich the soldiers, and ignore everyone else.’

The absence of the Emperor from the campaign of AD 210, implicit in Dio’s statement that Severus intended to conduct the projected campaign of 211 in person, is confirmed by Herodian’s account:

180. Herodian, III, 15, 1–3

Severus was now afflicted in his old age by a more prolonged illness, and as a result was forced to remain in his quarters. He attempted to send Antoninus out to direct the campaign, but Antoninus had little interest in the action against the barbarians and was trying instead to win over the army. He began to persuade the troops to look to him alone for orders, and canvassed for the position of sole ruler in every way he could, making slanderous attacks against his brother. His father, who had been ill for a long time and was taking his time dying, he regarded as a troublesome nuisance, and he tried to persuade the doctors and attendants to do the old man some injury as they treated him, so that he might be rid of him all the sooner. Eventually, however, worn out for the most part by grief, Severus passed away after a life more distinguished in military terms than any previous emperor. No one before him had won so many victories either in civil wars against rivals or in foreign wars against barbarians. After a reign of eighteen years he made way for his young sons to succeed, leaving them greater wealth than anyone before and an irresistible army.

As usual, the campaigns were celebrated with coin issues proclaiming victory:

181. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, IV, 1, p. 202, no. 818)



Obverse

L(ucius) Sept(imius) Severus Pius Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Victoriae Britannicae (Victories in Britain) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

182. Bronze sestertius (RIC, IV, 1, p. 288, no. 465)



Obverse

M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Antoninus Pius Aug(ustus) (Caracalla)

Reverse

As above

183. Bronze sestertius (RIC, IV, 1, p. 288, no. 464)



Obverse

M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Antoninus Pius Aug(ustus) (Caracalla)

Reverse

As above

For some reason, it is to Severus that some later writers attributed the construction of the Hadrianic and Antonine frontiers – a salutary reminder that sources can and do at times propagate nonsense:¹¹

184. Eutropius (4th C. AD), VIII, 19, 1

His final campaign was in Britain, and so as to fortify with complete security the provinces he had recovered, he built a wall for 32 (or 132) miles from sea to sea. He died at York, a pretty old man, after a reign of sixteen years three months.

The story, repeated in the fourth century by both Aurelius Victor¹² and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*,¹³ was continued in the fifth century by writers such as Orosius, though with the difference that the wall is now an earth rampart:

185. *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 17, 7–8

The victorious Severus was forced to go to Britain by the revolt of almost all the allies. There, after a large number of difficult engagements, he decided to separate off that part of the island he had recovered from the other unconquered tribes by means of a rampart. And so he built a great ditch and very strong rampart, fortified with numerous towers on it for 132 miles from sea to sea. And there he died of disease at the town of Eboracum.

cf.

186. Hieronymus (late 4th C. AD), *Chronica*, AD 207

Once Clodius Albinus, who had made himself Caesar in Gaul, had been killed at Lyons, Severus directed the war against the Britons. There, in order to make the provinces he had recovered more secure against attack by the barbarians, he built a rampart for 132 miles from sea to sea.

These references, presumably to the Antonine wall, were ultimately to find their way into Bede, writing in the eighth century:

187. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (History of the English Church)*, I, 5

In the year of our Lord 189 (actually 193) Severus, by birth an African from the town of Leptis in Tripolitania, succeeded to the throne, the seventeenth Emperor after Augustus, and reigned for seventeen years. Cruel in his character and constantly troubled by numerous wars, he ruled the state with great vigour, but also with a great deal of trouble. Following his victory in the grievous civil wars which assailed him he was forced to go to Britain by the revolt of almost all

the allies. There, after a large number of difficult engagements, he decided to separate off that part of the island he had recovered from the other unconquered tribes not by means of a wall, as some think, but by a rampart. For a wall is made of stone, but a rampart, with which a camp is fortified to repel the might of enemies, is made of turf cut from the earth and raised high above the ground like a wall. In front of it as a result is a ditch from which the turfs have been taken, and on top of it are fixed stakes made from the hardest wood. In this way Severus built a great ditch and very strong rampart fortified with numerous towers on it from sea to sea. And there he died of disease at the town of Eboracum.

The lack of enthusiasm attributed to Caracalla's prosecution of the Caledonian campaign while his father was still alive, was more than matched after Severus' death by a speedy abandonment of what had so far been gained:

188. Epitome of Dio Cassius, LXXVII, 1, 1

After this (the death of Severus), Antoninus assumed total control. In theory he ruled jointly with his brother, but in practice he was sole ruler from the start. The sources say he made peace with the enemy, withdrew from their territory, and abandoned the forts.

cf.

189. Herodian (3rd C. AD), III, 15, 6–7

When Antoninus made no progress with the army (in getting it to recognise him as sole ruler), he came to terms with the barbarians, granting them peace in return for pledges of good faith, left their territory and now hastened back to his mother and brother ... (Caracalla is forced to accept joint rule with Geta while regarding this as a temporary expedient) ... So the two of them administered the empire with equal authority. They decided to leave Britain and hastened back to Rome, taking with them their father's remains.

Despite this, coins commemorating victories in AD 211 continued to be minted. Did the literary sources suppress mention of a whole campaign, or do the coins pass off as victory what was in fact withdrawal?

190. Bronze sestertius (*RIC*, IV, 1, p. 291, no. 483c)



Obverse

M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Antoninus Pius Aug(ustus) Brit(annicus)

Reverse

Vict(oriae) Brit(annicae) (Victories in Britain) Tr(ibunicia) P(otestas) (Tribunician Power) XIII (times) Cos (Consul) III (times, AD 211) S(enatus) C(onsulto) (By decree of the Senate)

Or does a very fragmentary inscription from Carpow which seems to refer to AD 212 and continued construction there indicate that withdrawal from Scotland was less precipitate than is often represented?¹⁴ The friction between Severus' two sons during their stay in Britain, to which Herodian (III, 15, §189) gives witness, culminated early in 212 with the assassination of Geta. A rash of dedications declaring loyalty to Caracalla and dated to 213 could well mark an official response to counteract the unrest the event had caused:

191. From Old Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 905, restored)

... for the welfare of] our Lord, [the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoni]nus Pius Felix [Augustus, under] his Legate [Gaius Julius Ma]rcus, on the direction of [...] Prefect, the Augusta cavalry squadron [set this up in the fourth] consulship of the Emperor Antoninus [Augustus and] the second of Balbinus.

192. From Whitley Castle (*RIB*, I, 1202, restored)

For the Emperor Caesar, son [of the dei]f[ied] Lucius [Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus], most great conqueror of [Ara]bia, Adia[bene, and Parthia], grandson of the deified Anton[inus] Pius (Marcus Aurelius), conqueror of G[er]many and Sarmatia, great-grandson of the deified Antoni[nus Pius], great-great-grandson of the deified Hadrian, great-great-great-grandson of the deified Trajan, conqueror of Parthia, and of the deified Nerva, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus (Caracalla), mo[st great] conqueror of [P]arthia and [...] Pontifex Ma[ximus] (High Priest) in the sixteenth (?) year of his

holding Tribunician Power, twice saluted Imperator, four times Consul, Father of his Country, out of their joint duty and devotion, under the direction of [Gaius Julius Marcus], Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, the 2nd Cohort of Nervii, Roman Citizens, [devoted to his divine authority and majesty], set this up.¹⁵

That Caracalla's settlement of the northern frontier was, however, more successful than the haste with which Dio and Herodian describe his withdrawal from Scotland would imply, is given weight by the absence of references to trouble in the north for more than three-quarters of a century. Similarly, with the Severan division of Britain into two provinces now fully implemented, it was in the south, not the north, that the bulk of legionary forces was concentrated:

193. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), LV, 23, 2–6

Today only nineteen of the legions (i.e. those existing in Augustus' day) remain: the II Augusta, which has its winter quarters in Britannia Superior (S. Britain) ... the two VI legions, of which one, called Victrix, is in Britannia Inferior (N. Britain) ... the XX, called Valeria Victrix, in Britannia Superior (S. Britain).

Similarly, it was Britannia Superior which ranked higher in terms of those who governed it:

194. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 334)

The Emperors Valerian and Gallienus, Augusti, and Valerian, most noble Caesar, restored from ground-level barrack-blocks for the 7th Cohort, through the agency of His Excellency (*vir clarissimus* signifying Senatorial rank) Desticius Juba, Pro-Praetorian Legate of the Emperors, and of Vitulasius Laetianus, Legate of the II Legion Augusta, under the direction of Domitius Potentinus, Prefect of the same legion.

In contrast, the following inscription from South Shields has no reference to Senatorial status:

195. *RIB*, I, 1060

The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Pius Felix Augustus, grandson of the deified Severus, son of the deified Antoninus the Great, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) with Tribunician Power, Father of his Country, Consul, brought this water-supply¹⁶ for the use of soldiers of the 5th Cohort of Gauls, under the direction of Marius Valerianus, his Pro-Praetorian Legate.

The continuation of restoration work along the northern frontier throughout the period of the Severan dynasty, however, ensures it is Britannia Inferior that is the better documented of the two:

196. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1279)

For the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus (Caracalla), most great conqueror of Parthia, Britain and Germany, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the nineteenth year of his holding Tribunician Power (AD 216), twice saluted Imperator, four times Consul, Proconsul, Father of his Country, the 1st Loyal Cohort of Vardulli, Roman Citizens, part-mounted, 1,000-strong, Antoninus' own, built this under [...],¹⁷ Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.

197. From Birdoswald (*RIB*, I, 1914)

Under Modius Julius (AD 219), Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, the 1st Aelian Cohort of Dacians under the command of the Tribune Marcus Claudius Menander (built this).

198. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1280, restored)

For the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus (Elagabalus), in the third year of his holding Tribunician Power (AD 220), three times Consul, P[roconsul], Father of his Country, the 1st Loyal Cohort of Vardulli, A[ntoninus' own], built this artillery platform from ground-level under the direction of Tiberius Claudius Paul[inus], Pro-Praetorian [Le]gate of Augustus, [and under the superintendence] of the [Tribune], Publius Ae[lius Erasinus].

199. From Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1465, restored)

The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius [Antoninus Pius Felix] A[ugustus, most glorious priest of the Unconquered Sun-god Elagabalus], Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), [in the fourth year of his holding Tr]ibunician Power, [thrice] Consul, Father of his Country, [son of] the deified [Antoninus], grandson of the deified Severus, and Marcus [Aur]elius [Alexander, most noble] Caesar, [his partner] in empire, ... [restored (this building) which had collapsed] through age for the 2nd cavalry squadron of Asturians, [Antoninus' own], through the agency of Marius Valer[ianus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of the Augusti] under the superintendence of the Pre[f]ect of cavalry], Septimius Nilus. Dedicated on October 30th [in the consulship] of Gr[at]us and Sele[ucus] (AD 221).

200. From Chesterholm (*RIB*, I, 1706, restored)

[... The 4th Cohort] of Gauls, [Severus Alexander's own, de]voted to his divinity, [resto]red from ground-level this gate[way together with its to]wers

under Claudius Xenophon, Pro-[Praetorian] Legate of our [Emperor in Britannia Inferior] (AD 223), under the direction of [...]

201. From Great Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1738, restored)

The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Pius Felix Augustus restored from ground-level this granary, which had collapsed through age, for the soldiers of the 2nd Cohort of Asturians, Severus Alexander's own, while the province was being governed by [...] Maximus, [Pro-Praetorian] Legate [of Augustus, under the direction] of Valerius Martia[li]s, Centurion of the ... Legion in the consulship of Fu]sc[us for the second time and Dexter] (AD 225).

In this same period units of barbarian troops, *cunei* and *numeri*, ranking lower than auxiliaries, begin to make their appearance:

202. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1594)

To the god Mars and the two Alaisiagae, and to the divine power of the emperor, the German tribesmen of Tuihantis¹⁸ of the formation (*cuneus*) of Frisians of Vercovicium, Severus Alexander's own, willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

203. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1270)

Sacred to the goddess Roma. The soldiers on double pay (*duplicarii*) in the unit (*numerus*) of Scouts (*Exploratores*) at Bremenium set up this altar on her birthday (April 21st) under the direction of the Tribune Caepio Charitinus, willingly and deservedly fulfilling their vow.

204. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1262)

To the Spirit of Our Lord and the Standards of the 1st Cohort of Vardulli and the unit (*numerus*) of Scouts (*Exploratores*) at Bremenium, Gordian's Own, Egnatius Lucilianus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus (set this up) under the direction of the Tribune Cassius Sabinianus.

USURPATION AND RECOVERY

Following the murder of Severus Alexander in AD 235, the empire was shaken by nearly two decades of governmental chaos as one usurper after another laid claim to the imperial throne. Though the accession of Valerian and Gallienus in 253 brought with it a period of relative respite, the western defences of the empire, severely weakened by civil war, were put under still further strain when a massive invasion by the Alamanni of Germany was able to penetrate as far as Milan in 258. In 260, Gallienus' own commander on the Rhine, Postumus, asserted his claim to rule and won support from the provinces of Germany, Gaul, Spain and Britain.

205. Milestone from Trecastle Hill (*RIB*, I, 2260)

For our Lord, the Emperor Marcus Cassianius Latinus Postumus Pius Felix Augustus.

206. From Lancaster (*RIB*, I, 605 restored)

[For the Emperor Postumus¹ ... on account of] the rebuilt bathhouse [and] the basilica which had collapsed through age and was rebuilt from ground-level for the troopers of the Sebosian cavalry squadron, [Postumus' own], under His Excellency Octavius Sabinus, our Governor (*Praeses*), and under the direction of Flavius Ammausius, Prefect of cavalry. Dedicated on August 22nd in the second consulship of Censor and Lepidus.

For the next fourteen years, the west was to constitute a separate Gallic empire, and it was not until 274 that it was eventually suppressed by Aurelian. Later still, the reign of Probus (276–82) saw a further attempt at secession instigated by Bonosus:

207. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Probus*, 18, 5

Then Proculus and Bonosus seized power in Gaul at Agrippina and claimed for themselves all the provinces of Britain, Spain and Further Gaul. Probus, however, defeated them with the help of barbarians.

Within Britain too we hear of rebellion, by an unnamed governor:

208. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), I, 66, 2

Probus also put an end to another rebellion, which had broken out in Britain, through the agency of Victorinus, a Moor by birth. It was on his advice that Probus had come to appoint as governor of Britain the man who was now in revolt. Having summoned Victorinus, he censured him for his advice and sent him to rectify his mistake. Victorinus immediately set out for Britain and got rid of the usurper by means of a clever trick.

As in the days of Marcus Aurelius, however, Britain continued to provide a useful station for prisoners of war, and it was here that Probus sent the survivors of his victory over the Vandals and Burgundians in 277:

209. Zosimus, I, 68, 1–3

He fought a second battle against the Franks, over whom he won a resounding victory through his generals, and then personally engaged the Burgundians and Vandals in battle ... Those he was able to take alive he sent to Britain, where they settled and became useful to the Emperor when anyone later rebelled.

With the accession of Diocletian to the throne in 284, the empire at long last saw a return to stable and firm government. The following year he appointed Maximian to the rank of Caesar with responsibility for defending the Western Empire, and in 286 Maximian was further elevated to the rank of joint Augustus. In his efforts to counteract the increasing problem of piratical raids on the coasts of Gaul and Britain, however, Maximian was inadvertently sowing the seeds of further rebellion:

210. Aurelius Victor (4th C. AD), *Liber de Caesaribus*, 39, 20–1

In this war² Carausius, a Menapian, distinguished himself by his effective actions. For this reason and because he was considered an expert pilot – in his youth he had earned his living in this capacity – he was put in charge of fitting out a fleet and repelling the Germans who infested the seas. Carried away by this promotion, he failed to restore the whole of the booty to the treasury, though he intercepted many of the barbarians, and through fear of Herculus (Maximian) who, he discovered, had ordered his death, he assumed the title of Emperor and seized control of Britain.

cf.

211. Eutropius (4th C. AD), IX, 21

About this time too Carausius, a man of very low birth, had won great distinction as a result of a successful career in the army. From his headquarters in Bononia (Boulogne) he had undertaken the task of policing the sea in the region of Belgica and Armorica (north-west Gaul), which was then swarming with Franks and Saxons. However, though many barbarians were frequently intercepted, their booty was not returned to the provincials in its entirety, nor was it sent to the Emperors. As a result the suspicion arose that he was deliberately letting the barbarians in so as to catch them as they passed through with their booty and in this way enrich himself. When his execution was ordered by Maximian, he assumed the purple and seized control of Britain.³

From the point of view of the empire, the loss of Britain and much of northern Gaul⁴ was a not-inconsiderable blow, even discounting the purple prose with which some sources describe the event. It is also clear that the Franks and Saxons in the Channel were not the only enemy Britain now faced. For the first time we begin to hear of an Irish menace:

212. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar (delivered AD 297), 11

And certainly, though Britain was but a single name, its loss to the state was not without significance – a land so rich in harvests, with such abundant pasture, shot through with so many seams of ore, a lucrative source of so much tribute, girded round with so many ports, so vast in its extent. When Caesar, the origin of your name, entered it, the first Roman to do so, he wrote that he had found another world. ... The Britons too, at that time primitive and used only to foes as yet half-naked, like the Picts and the Irish, gave way with ease before the arms and standards of Rome, so much so that in his campaigns Caesar should have made this single boast: that he had crossed the Ocean.

Notwithstanding the personal motivation attributed to the rebellion, the fact that Carausius was able to gain and retain widespread support on both sides of the Channel suggests no small disenchantment with the central government:

213. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar (delivered AD 297), 12, 1

In that vile act of brigandage the fleeing pirate seized first the fleet which once protected provinces of Gaul, built many more besides in Roman style, seduced a Roman legion,⁵ cut off divisions of provincial troops, recruited Gallic merchants

to his service, won over hordes of barbarous forces by spoils from the provinces themselves, and through instruction by supporters of that disgraceful act he trained them all for naval duties.

Carausius' preparations for the inevitable clash with Maximian were not in fact to prove untimely. An early and much vaunted attempt was made to topple the usurper, probably in AD 288–9:

**214. Panegyric on Maximian (delivered AD 289), 11, 7
and 12, 1–8**

- 11 It is a mark I say of your good fortune, your success, oh Emperor, that even now your soldiers have reached the Ocean victorious; even now the ebb and flow of tide has drained the blood of enemies slaughtered on that shore.
- 12 What spirit does that pirate⁶ now possess, when he sees your armies almost reach the strait which alone thus far delays his death, armies that forget their ships and follow the receding sea? What island more remote, what other Ocean can he long for? ... The finest fleets were constructed and equipped, fleets that were destined to make for Ocean along every river at once⁷ ... Thus did the vessels make their assault upon the waves that of their own accord slipped under them, vessels gently set in motion by the efforts of those who propelled them ... Thus, it is easy, Emperor, for all to understand what propitious success will attend you in this maritime undertaking.

In contrast, the almost total silence of the panegyricists as regards its outcome, together with a reference to bad weather, suggest it fell far short of its intended aim:

**215. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar (delivered AD
297), 12, 1–2**

Your troops in contrast, though in valour unsurpassed, were none the less unused to naval action. And so we heard that from a shameful act of brigandage the evil threat of war had sprung, sure though we were of its outcome. On top of this, the crime so long unpunished had fanned the insolence of those reckless men to boast that roughness of the sea, which by constraint of fate delayed your victory, was fear of them. The war had been abandoned in despair, so they believed, not just postponed by act of policy.

Clearly it was now for Maximian to come to terms with Carausius and bide his time:

216. Eutropius (4th C. AD), IX, 22, 2

Eventually, however, a peace was arranged with Carausius after military operations against this expert strategist had been attempted without success.

With his assumption of the purple, Carausius was not slow to bolster up his powerful military and naval position with a propaganda campaign waged through the medium of coinage:

217. Silver denarius (*RIC*, V, 2, p. 510, no. 554)



Obverse

Imp(erator) Carausius P(ius) F(elix) Au(gustus)

Reverse

Expectate Veni (Come, oh welcome and long-awaited one)

RSR (Redeunt Saturnia Regna: 'The age of Saturn returns', i.e. the golden age). See further, de la Bédoyère.

218. Bronze antoninianus (*RIC*, V, 2, p. 493, no. 343)



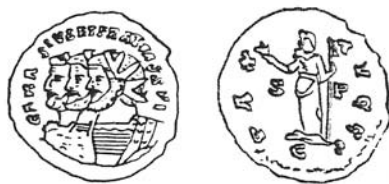
Obverse

Imp(erator) G(aius) Carausius P(ius) Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Pietas Auggg⁸ (The Piety of the three Augusti)

219. Bronze antoninianus (RIC, V, 2, p. 550, no. 1)



Obverse

Carausius et Fratres Sui (Carausius and his Brothers)

Reverse

Pax Auggg (The Peace of the three Augusti)

220. Gold aureus (RIC, V, 2, p. 554, no. 32)



Obverse

Maximianus P(rius) F(elix) Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Salus Auggg⁹ (The Safety of the three Augusti)

In 293, the division of power between Diocletian and Maximian was further enlarged by the appointment of two Caesars, thus effectively dividing the empire into four spheres of influence. From now on, the task of removing Carausius was the responsibility of the Caesar Constantius. Rather than repeat Maximian's ill-fated naval assault, however, Constantius aimed first to seize Boulogne, Carausius' main port of entry to mainland Europe, and in this way deny him access to his continental power base:

221. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar, 6, 1–2

And so immediately by your coming, Caesar, you made the provinces of Gaul your own. Indeed that swiftness with which you outstripped all the news of your elevation and arrival allowed you to seize and crush within the walls of Gesoriacum (Boulogne) the company of that piratical clique which still clung to its poor delusions; you denied to them, who once relied upon the sea, the ocean lapping

at their city gates. In this your divine foresight and success, the equal of your plans, displayed themselves; for all of that harbour's basin, where the swell of Ocean ebbs and flows, you made impassable for ships, with piles fixed at its mouth and added mounds of rock. You overcame with marvellous ingenuity the very nature of the place; for now the sea with ineffectual ebb and flow appeared as if to mock them, prevented as they were from escape, and proved as little use to them shut in as if it had ceased to flow at all.¹⁰

For Carausius, the loss of Boulogne so soon after the elevation of Constantius was evidently a blow to his prestige sufficiently great to prompt his assassination:

222. Eutropius (4th C. AD), IX, 22, 2

After seven years (AD 293), Carausius was assassinated by his associate Allectus, who subsequently himself controlled the British provinces for a space of three years.¹¹

223. Bronze antoninianus (RIC, V, 2, p. 562, no. 47)



Obverse

Imp(erator) G(aius) Allectus P(ius) F(elix) Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Temporum Felicitas (Happiness of the Age)

For the next phase of operations, the assault on Britain itself, Constantius would need a fleet. Its construction, together with the need to meet threats elsewhere along the western frontier, took up the next three years:

224. Panegyric on Constantine, 5, 3

And when by virtue of his valour he had seized that same army (in Boulogne) and by his mercy spared it, and while recovery of Britain was being put under way by building fleets, with guidance from a one-time native of the place, he drove all hostile forces from Batavia, which Frankish tribes had occupied. Nor was he content with victory over them; those very tribes he brought to Roman lands and forced them to put off not just their arms but their savageness as well.

225. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar, 7, 3

For the war, invincible Caesar, could have been brought to an end straight away by that onslaught of your valour and good fortune, had not the situation persuaded you to take time for the construction of ships.

By 296, preparations for invasion were complete, and the expedition, employing a two-pronged attack, could get under way:

226. Panegyric on Constantius Caesar, 13–20

- 13 And so this war, so unavoidable, so inaccessible, of such long standing, so well prepared for, you undertook in such a way, Caesar, that immediately you aimed at it the furious bolt of your majesty, all thought it finished. First of all – and this required special care – by calling on your father's majesty you ensured that while your might was turned towards that war, the nations of barbarians would not attempt revolt. You yourself, you Lord Maximian, eternal Emperor, deigning with unprecedented speed to hasten the arrival of your divinity, took up at once your place upon the Rhine, and guarded all that frontier not with forces made of infantry or cavalry, but by the terror of your presence. Maximian was as strong as any number of armies upon the riverbank. But you, invincible Caesar, drew up and armed your separate fleets, and rendered the enemy so confused, so devoid of plan, that then at last he was by Ocean not protected but instead confined.
- 14 ... But you, invincible Caesar, commanded that whole voyage and the war not merely by virtue of your imperial rank; by your very deeds and the example of your steadfastness you both encouraged and inspired it. Indeed you led the way in setting out from the coast at Gesoriacum (Boulogne) despite the raging sea, and inspired in that army of yours which had sailed down the River Seine an unquenchable resolution, so much so that though your generals still hesitated, with sea and sky in wild disorder, of its own accord the army demanded the signal to sail, poured scorn on threatening portents to be seen, set sail midst rain, and since the wind was not behind, they tacked across it. For who would not dare entrust himself to sea, however rough, when you were sailing? When news arrived that you had sailed, all, it is said, were of one voice, one exhortation: 'Why do we hesitate, why delay? He himself has now set sail, even now is under way, has perhaps by now arrived. Let us endure all things, let us pass through any seas. What is there for us to fear? We are following Caesar!'
- 15 Nor in their opinion of your own good fortune were they deceived. As we learn by their own accounts, at that very moment such mist swirled over the surface of the sea that the hostile fleet, on station at the Isle of Vecta (Wight) as look-out and in ambush, was bypassed with the enemy in total ignorance, and

thus unable to delay our attack, still less resist it. As for the fact that the army, invincible under your leadership, set fire to all its ships the moment it set foot upon the coast of Britain, who else inspired that act except the will of your divinity? Or what other reasoning persuaded them to maintain in reserve no refuge for retreat, nor fear the uncertainties of war, nor contemplate that Mars may favour either side, except the certain knowledge, sprung from observation of yourself, that there could be no doubt about victory? It was not their might nor human strength they had in mind, but your divine will. In every battle that presents itself it is not the soldiers' confidence that ensures success, so much as generals' fortune. Yet why did that ringleader of the abominable clique abandon the coast he occupied? Why did he desert his fleet and harbour unless he feared your imminent arrival, invincible Caesar, when he saw your sails bearing down on him? At all events he preferred to take his chance with your commanders rather than to feel in person the thunderbolt of your majesty. The fool, not to know that wherever he fled, there was the might of your divinity – wherever your image and standards were venerated!

- 16 Yet in fleeing from you he fell into the hands of your men, and defeated by you he was overwhelmed by your armies. Finally, in terror, looking for you behind him, crazed like some madman, he so hastened to his death that he neither deployed his line of battle nor arranged the forces he trailed after him, but rather, mindless of his great preparations, he rushed to the attack with only those old instigators of the plot and divisions of foreign mercenaries. And so, Caesar, even this advantage did your good fortune bestow upon the state, that in this victory of the Roman Empire scarcely did a single Roman fall. For, so I am told, all those plains and hills were littered only with the prostrate corpses of our loathsome enemies. Those bodies of barbarians or those that once feigned barbarous ways in style of dress and long blond hair, now lay besmirched with dust and gore, frozen into various attitudes of death imposed by agony of wounds, and among them the ringleader of that band of brigands himself. Of his own accord the royal robe that in his lifetime he defiled, he'd taken off, and by the evidence of scarce a single garment was he recognised. So truly had he taken counsel with himself as death approached, that he was eager to escape detection in his death.
- 17 Indeed, invincible Caesar, with such accord have the immortal gods granted you destruction of all the enemies you assailed, and especially the Franks, that those troops of yours, who had lost their way through fog at sea, became detached, as mentioned up above, and made their way to London; there through all the city they destroyed the remnants of the barbarous horde that had survived the battle, just as they were taking thought for flight after pillaging the place, and thus afforded your provincials not only safety by the slaughter of the foe, but also the pleasure of beholding it. What a manifold victory, one marked by countless triumphs! By it Britain was restored, by it the power of the Franks eradicated, by it the necessity of obedience imposed on many tribes besides, found guilty of complicity in that crime; by it finally

were the seas for peace eternal cleansed. You may boast, invincible Caesar, that you have discovered another world when, by restoring to the might of Rome its naval prestige, you added to her empire an element greater than all lands. You have, I say, invincible Caesar, put an end to a war that seemed to threaten every province, that could have spread and flared up anywhere that the Ocean and the gulf of the Mediterranean lap the land ...

- 19 Deserved, therefore, was the triumphal gathering that streamed forth to greet your majesty the moment that you landed on the shore, the longed-for avenger and liberator. Beside themselves with joy, the Britons met you with their wives and children. With veneration they regarded not only you yourself, on whom they looked as one from heaven descended, but even the sails and oars of that vessel that brought your divine person, and they were ready on their prostrate bodies your tread to feel. No wonder is it if they were borne along by such great joy after so many years of most wretched captivity, the violation of their wives, their children's shameful servitude. At last they were free, at last Romans, at last restored afresh by the true light of the empire ...
- 20 ... Beyond Ocean indeed what was there except Britain? So completely did you recover it that even those tribes dwelling at the far ends of the isle submit to your will.

To celebrate the retaking of London, a commemorative medallion was struck, showing Constantius advancing on horseback towards a kneeling woman, the personification of London. Below, one of his galleys approaches. Found at Arras in France:

227. Medallion on the retaking of London



Obverse

Fl(avius) Val(erius) Constantius Nobil(is) (Noble) Caes(ar)



Reverse

Redditor Lucis Aeternae (Restorer of Eternal Light) Lon(dinium) PTR (Mint-mark of Trier)

Following the destruction of Allectus and his mercenary forces, Constantius' hold on Britain seems to have been quickly established, and in 297 he was able to return to the continent. For nearly a decade thereafter few events are recorded, and inscriptions to mark rebuilding along the northern frontier, once interpreted as necessitated by enemy action, seem more likely to have been prompted by the need for periodic refurbishing in the face of neglect and deterioration with age:

228. From Birdoswald (*RIB*, I, 1912 restored)

[For our Lords] Dioc[letian] and M[axim]ian, the Invincible Augusti, and for Constantius and (Galerius) Maximian, Most Noble Caesars, under His Perfection Aurelius Arpagius, Governor (*Praeses*¹²), the Cohort [...] restored the commandant's house, which had fallen into ruin and was covered with earth, and the headquarters building and the bathhouse, under the direction of Flavius Martinus, Centurion in command.

In AD 305, Diocletian and Maximian abdicated, and it was as Augustus that Constantius returned to Britain in order to campaign in the north. The actual motive for the campaign and its detailed course go unrecorded:

229. Panegyric on Constantine, 7, 1-2

The day would end before my speech if all your father's deeds I surveyed, however briefly. In that last great campaign of his he did not seek for British trophies, as is generally believed, but with the gods already calling him he drew close to the furthest limit of the earth. And yet, with deeds so many and so various already performed, he did not seek to occupy the forests and marshes of the Caledonians and other Picts, not to mention nearby Ireland and furthest Thule and the Islands of the Blessed, if they exist. Rather, something he wished to tell no man, though he was about to join the gods, he went to gaze upon the Ocean, that father of the gods who restores the fiery stars of heaven, so that as one about to savour endless light he might already see almost continuous day.

It was while Constantius was in Britain, and shortly before his death at York in 306, that he was joined by his son Constantine:

**230. Aurelius Victor (4th C. AD), *Liber de Caesaribus*,
40, 2-4**

Constantine, whose active mind was stirred from childhood by the desire to rule, could not stand this (that Severus had been appointed Constantius' Caesar by Galerius), affected flight, and having killed the post-horses along his route in

order to frustrate those pursuing him, he reached Britain. For he was being held as hostage by Galerius on the pretext of religion. And it happened that just at that time death was pressing hard upon his father Constantius there. On Constantius' death and in response to pressure from all those present Constantine assumed imperial honours.

231. Eutropius (4th C. AD), X, 1, 3 and 2, 2

- 1 Constantius died at Eboracum (York) in Britain in the 13th year of his reign (AD 306), and was deified ...
- 2 On the death of Constantius Constantine, his son by a somewhat undistinguished marriage, was made emperor in Britain, and succeeded to his father's position as a very popular ruler.

232. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), II, 8, 2 and 9, 1

- 8 With the situation settled and the barbarians everywhere glad to keep the peace as a result of our previous successes, Constantine, the offspring of a humble concubine of the Emperor Constantius, conceived the idea of gaining the throne. This desire increased when Severus and Maximinus were granted the rank of Caesar (to the emperors Constantius and Galerius respectively), and Constantine decided to leave the place where he happened to be living and to set out for his father Constantius who was in the provinces beyond the Alps and resided mostly in Britain ...
- 9 The Emperor Constantius happened to die at this time and the troops of the court judged that none of Constantius' legitimate children was capable of ruling. Seeing, however, that Constantine was a fine figure of a man, and at the same time inspired by hopes of large donations, they invested him with the rank of Caesar.

**233. A Carausian Milestone reused for Constantine.
From near Carlisle (RIB, I, 2291–2)**

One end

For the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Mausaeus Carausius Pius Felix, the
Unconquered Augustus

The other end

For Flavius Valerius Constantinus, Noble Caesar

REORGANISATION AND THE DYNASTY OF CONSTANTIUS

Despite its popularity among the troops in Britain, the elevation of Constantine to the rank of Augustus in 306 struck directly at the principle of succession established by Diocletian; for, according to this, the automatic choice to fill the now-vacant throne was not Constantine but his father's Caesar, Flavius Valerius Severus. To complicate matters further, the Praetorian Guard in Rome reverted to their former role of emperor-makers by raising to the purple Maximian's son, Maxentius. The result until 324 was an unprecedented period of imperial rivalry and conflict punctuated by repeated attempts to restore some semblance of ordered government by negotiation in the face of multiple claimants to imperial honours.¹ For a year, Constantine himself was induced to accept the lesser rank of Caesar until the official western Augustus, Severus, was killed by Maxentius in 307. In turn Maxentius himself was eventually disposed of by Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312.

British contingents as part of Constantine's move against Maxentius:

234. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), II, 15, 1

Constantine, who had previously been suspicious of Maxentius, now made further preparations for the fight against him. Having gathered together forces from the barbarians he had taken prisoner, both German and from other Celtic tribes, as well as levies from Britain, a total of around 90,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry, he marched from the Alps into Italy.

Of the other claimants Maximian died or was killed in 310 after being besieged in Marseilles by Constantine, and Maximinus died shortly after his defeat at the hands of Licinius in 313. With Constantine by now supreme in the west and Licinius in the east there might clearly have been some reason to hope for a return to stability and the balanced division of power envisaged by Diocletian, had not the personal ambitions and mutual enmity of the two Augusti soon led to a resumption of hostility. In 324, however, the issue was finally resolved with the defeat and death of Licinius. In the meantime, the reunification of Britain with the

rest of the empire accomplished by Constantius in 296 had made possible the implementation of further provincial reorganisation. Under the Tetrarchy (the fourfold division of power originally established by Diocletian) the north-west sector of the empire, which constituted the western Caesar's sphere of operations, was controlled in fact by his deputy, the Praetorian Prefect. Subordinate to him were Vicars (*Vicarii*), each at the head of newly-constituted dioceses, of which Britain was to form a single instance. Within the diocese in turn the further subdivisions into provinces were headed by Praesides or Rectors.

235. From Cirencester (*RIB*, I, 103 restored)

Front

To Jupiter Greatest [and Best], His Perfection (*vir perfectissimus*) Lucius Septimius [...], Governor (*Praeses*) of B[ritannia Prima], and a citizen of R[eims], resto[red] (this).

Back

This statue and column raised under the old religion.

Left

Septimius, Ruler (*Rector*) of the province Prima, renews.

At what date this radical reorganisation was actually put into effect within Britain itself is not known, but by c. 314 it was clearly a reality:

236. *Verona List*, VII

The Diocese of Britain has four provinces:

1. Prima
2. Secunda
3. Maxima Caesariensis
4. Flavia Caesariensis

With time, the division of power was further developed by divorcing civil from military authority. Under Constantine himself or his immediate successors the existing administration appears to have lost its military function, which now became vested in the offices of Duke and Count. The *Notitia Dignitatum*, a list of officials produced probably in the first quarter of the fifth century, lists the following personnel for the Diocese of Britain:²

237. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 23

Vicar of the British provinces

- 8 Under the control of the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Vicar of the British provinces:

- 9 Consular governors (of):
- 10 Maxima Caesariensis.
- 11 Valentia.³
- 12 Praesides (governors with the rank of *Praeses*) (of):
- 13 Britannia Prima.
- 14 Britannia Secunda.
- 15 Flavia Caesariensis.
- 16 This same *Vir Spectabilis*, the Vicar, has the following staff ...

238. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 11

- 3 Under the control of the *Vir Illustris*, the Count of the Sacred Largesses:
- 20 The Treasurer (*Rationalis*) of finances in the Provinces of Britain.
- 36 In the British Provinces:
- 37 The Director (*Praepositus*) of the Treasury in London.
- 60 Procurator of the cloth factory at Venta in the Provinces of Britain.

239. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 12

- 3 Under the control of the *Vir Illustris*, the Count of the Privy Purse:
- 15 The Treasurer (*Rationalis*) of the Privy Purse in the British Provinces.

240. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 40

- 17 Under the control of the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Duke of the Provinces of Britain:
- 18 Prefect of the VI Legion (York).
- 19 Prefect of the Dalmatian cavalry at Praesidium (?).
- 20 Prefect of the Crispian cavalry at Danum (Doncaster?/Jarrow?).
- 21 Prefect of the armoured cavalry at Morbium (?).
- 22 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Tigris boatmen at Arbeia (S. Shields).
- 23 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Nervii of Dictum at Dictum (Wearmouth?).
- 24 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Watchmen (*Vigiles*) at Concangis (Chester-le-Street).
- 25 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Scouts (*Exploratores*) at Lavatris (Bowes).
- 26 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Directores at Verteris (Brough Castle).
- 27 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Defenders (*Defensores*) at Bravoniacum (Kirkby Thore).
- 28 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Solenses at Maglona (Old Carlisle?).
- 29 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Pacenses at Magis (Burrow Walls?).
- 30 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Longovicani at Longovicium (Lanchester).
- 31 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Supervenientes of Petuaria at Derventio (Malton).
- 32 Also along the line of the wall:
- 33 Tribune of the 4th cohort of Lingones at Segedunum (Wallsend).

- 34 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Cornovii at Pons Aelius (Newcastle).
- 35 Prefect of the 1st squadron (*ala*) of Asturians at Condercum (Benwell).
- 36 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Frixagores at Vindobala (Rudchester).
- 37 Prefect of the Ala Sabiniana at Hunnum (Halton Chesters).
- 38 Prefect of the 2nd squadron (*ala*) of Austurians at Cilurnum (Chesters).
- 39 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Batavians at Procolitia (Carrawburgh).
- 40 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Tungrians at Borcovicium (= Vercovicium, Housesteads).
- 41 Tribune of the 4th cohort of Gauls at Vindolanda (Chesterholm).
- 42 Tribune of the 2nd⁴ cohort of Asturians at Aesica (Gt. Chesters).
- 43 Tribune of the 2nd cohort of Dalmatians at Magnis (Carvoran).
- 44 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Hadrian's Dacians at (C)Amboglanna (Castlesteads).⁵
- 45 Prefect of the Ala Petriana at Petriana.⁶
- 46 ⁷
- 47 Prefect of the unit (*numerus*) of Aurelian Moors at Aballaba (Burgh-by-Sands).
- 48 Tribune of the 2nd cohort of Lingones at Concavata (Drumburgh).
- 49 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Spaniards at Axelodunum.⁸
- 50 Tribune of the 2nd cohort of Thracians at Gabrosentum (Moresby).
- 51 Tribune of the 1st cohort Aelia Classica at Tunnocelum (?).
- 52 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Morini at Glannibanta (Ravenglass).
- 53 Tribune of the 3rd cohort of Nervii at Alione (Maryport).
- 54 Formation (*cuneus*) of Sarmatians at Bremetenracum (Ribchester).
- 55 Prefect of the 1st Ala Herculea at Olenacum (Elsack?).
- 56 Tribune of the 6th cohort of Nervii at Virosidum (Brough by Bainbridge).
- 57 This same *Vir Spectabilis*, the Duke, has the following staff ...

241. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 28

- 1 The Count⁹ of the Saxon Shore in Britain:
- 12 Under the control of the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count of the Saxon Shore in Britain:
- 13 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the unit (*numerus*) of Fortenses at Othona (Bradwell).
- 14 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the Tungrecanian troops at Dubrae (Dover).
- 15 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the unit (*numerus*) of Turnacenses at Lemanis (Lympne).
- 16 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the Dalmatian cavalry of Branodunum at Branodunum (Brancaster).
- 17 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the Stablesian cavalry of Gariannonenses at Gariannonum (Burgh Castle).
- 18 Tribune of the 1st cohort of Baetasii at Regulbium (Reculver).
- 19 Prefect of the II Legion Augusta at Rutupiae (Richborough).
- 20 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the unit (*numerus*) of Abulci at Anderitum (Pevensey).
- 21 Commander (*Praepositus*) of the unit (*numerus*) of Scouts (*Exploratores*) at Portus Adurni (Portchester).
- 22 This same *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count, has the following staff ...

242. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 29

- 1 The Count of the Provinces of Britain.
- 4 Under the control of the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count of the Provinces of Britain:
- 5 The Province of Britain.
- 6 This same *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count, has the following staff ...

243. *Notitia Dignitatum*, 7

Distribution of units (*numeri*):

- 153 In the provinces of Britain with the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count of the Provinces of Britain:
- 154 Victores juniores Britannici.
- 155 Primani juniores.
- 156 Secundani juniores.
- 199 In the provinces of Britain with the *Vir Spectabilis*, the Count of the Provinces of Britain:
- 200 Equites catafractarii juniores.
- 201 Equites scutarii juniores.
- 202 Equites Honoriani seniores.
- 203 Equites Stablesiani.
- 204 Equites Syri.
- 205 Equites Taifali.

That Constantine returned to Britain on at least one occasion¹⁰ during his reign is indicated by the issuing of coins from the London mint proclaiming his arrival, and the writings of Eusebius. What remains unknown is exactly when, and the purpose involved:

244. Coins of Constantine

(*RIC*, VI p. 134, no. 141), AD 310–12



Obverse

Constantinus Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Adventus Aug (The Arrival of the Augustus)

(*RIC*, VII, p. 97, no. 1), AD 313–14



Obverse

Imp(erator) Constantinus Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Adventus Aug N (The Arrival of our Augustus)

245. From Africa (*ILS*, 8942), AD 315

For the Emperor Caesar Flavius Constantinus Maximus Pius Felix, the Unconquered Augustus, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) ... great conqueror of Britain ... in the tenth year of his holding Tribunician Power, four times Consul, saluted Imperator for the ninth time, Father of his Country, Proconsul, Annaeus Saturninus, devoted to his divinity, set this up ...

246. Eusebius (4th C. AD), *De vita Constantini*, I, 25

After he was firmly established in the empire he turned his thoughts to what his father had bequeathed him, and looked with great kindness on all the nations that had been guided by his father's government ... In the meantime he crossed over to Britain which lies within Ocean itself and once he had subjugated this he turned his attention to other parts of the world.

In 337 Constantine died, and the Empire once again underwent fragmentation as each of the Emperor's three surviving sons was proclaimed Augustus. Of these, the eldest, Constantine II, controlled Britain, Spain and Gaul, Constans, the youngest, held Italy, the Balkans and Africa, while to Constantius II fell the provinces of the east. In 340, however, Constantine II, at odds with his brother over control of the west, invaded Italy and was quickly killed. Within two years the situation in Britain had for some reason become serious enough to warrant a mid-winter visit by Constans early in 343:¹¹

247. Julius Firmicus Maternus (4th C. AD), *De errore profanum religionum*, 28, 6

You (Constans) conquered your enemies; you have extended your authority, and so that greater glory might be added to your virtues, you have changed and

scorned the order of the seasons, trampling underfoot the swelling, raging waves of Ocean in winter time, a deed unprecedented in the past, and not to be matched in the future. Beneath your oars trembled the waves of a sea still scarcely known to us, and the Briton trembled before the face of an emperor he did not expect.

248. Libanius (4th C. AD), Oration 59, 139 and 141

- 139 Constans did not wait around sitting on the coast until the spring arrived and the Ocean storms abated, but straight away in mid-winter with everything, clouds, cold and swell, roused to total fury by the weather, he embarked a hundred men, so it is said, and casting off he clove the Ocean, and straight away everything became calm. He sent no advance warning to the cities there, nor did he make any prior announcement of his sailing, or wish to create a stir with his plans before he had completed the venture ...
- 141 If he had risked sailing with the island in revolt, with its inhabitants rebelling and the government overthrown, and if he had been seized with anger on hearing these reports, one would not have attributed his daring to ambition. Instead the element of compulsion created by those in revolt would have removed most of his glory. As it was, affairs in Britain were stable ...

Later in the same decade, Britain saw the arrival of the Elder Gratian, father of the future Emperor Valentinian, and since he held the rank of Count (*Comes*) it seems reasonable to presume he brought with him units of the continental mobile field army, the *Comitatenses*, to bolster for some unrecorded reason the *Limitanei* forces that provided the established garrison of the diocese:

249. Ammianus Marcellinus (late 4th C. AD), XXX, 7, 3

Gratian was widely known because of his great physical strength and his skill in wrestling military-style. After holding the position of bodyguard and Tribune, he was given command of the army in Africa with the rank of Count. There he became suspected of theft and left. Some considerable time later, he commanded the army in Britain with the same rank and was at length given an honourable discharge and returned home.

In 350, Constans himself fell victim to the usurper Magnentius, who held on to the Western Empire until his final defeat three years later at the hands of the eastern Augustus, Constantius II. That Magnentius had enjoyed not inconsiderable support in Britain is suggested by the savageness of the reprisals Constantius inflicted through his Secretary (*Notarius*) Paul:

250. Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 5, 6–8

Prominent among these was the Secretary Paul, a native of Spain, behind whose face there lurked a serpent, and who was very adroit at sniffing out hidden paths of danger. He was sent to Britain to fetch certain members of the armed forces who had dared to join Magnentius' conspiracy, and when they were unable to offer any resistance, he took it upon himself to exceed his instructions. Like a flood he suddenly overwhelmed the fortunes of many, sweeping forward amidst widespread slaughter and ruin, casting freeborn men into prison and degrading some with fetters, all this by fabricating charges that were far removed from the truth. Thus was perpetrated an impious crime, which branded Constantius' time with an everlasting mark of shame. Martinus, who governed those provinces on behalf of the Prefects, deeply deplored the calamities afflicting the innocent, and frequently made the plea that those free from all blame should be spared. When he failed in his pleas, he threatened to resign so that the evil inquisitor, alarmed by this at least, might desist from driving into obvious danger men who were devoted to peace.

Paul considered this a restriction on his activities, and being a formidable expert in creating complications – hence he was dubbed with the nickname 'the Chain' – he involved the Vicar himself, who was still attempting to protect those he governed, in the danger faced by them all. He threatened to take him in chains to the emperor's court along with the tribunes and many others. Martinus was alarmed at this, and with the threat of sudden death spurring him on he attacked Paul with a sword. Because, however, he was unable to deal a fatal blow owing to a weakness in his right hand, he then plunged the drawn sword into his own side. By this ignominious death there departed this life a most just ruler, one who had dared to alleviate the pitiable misfortunes of many.

Though official inquisitions might wreak havoc on the lives and fortunes of individuals, Britain in this period remained largely immune to the large-scale barbarian incursions that caused widespread disruption to the life and economy of the continental empire. For this reason, the island became increasingly regarded as an invaluable and reliable source of raw materials and grain. It was indeed largely to ensure the free passage of such grain to the garrison of the north-west frontier that Julian, appointed Caesar in 355 and given charge of Gaul and Britain, embarked upon a series of major campaigns aimed at reopening the supply route along the Rhine, which enemy action had effectively blocked:

251. Libanius (4th C. AD), Oration, 18, 82–3

He took thought for the largest island under the sun, which Ocean surrounds, and sent accountants to examine the expenditure that in theory was devoted to military operations, but in fact formed a source of income for the generals.

Those guilty of this he brought to heel, and in addition he effected another far greater benefit, especially from the point of view of Gaul. In earlier times corn was shipped from the island, first over the sea and then up the Rhine, but since the barbarians had become a force to be reckoned with, they had blocked its transport and the cargo vessels had long been hauled ashore and had rotted away. A few still plied, but since they discharged their cargo in coastal ports, it was necessary to transport the grain by waggon instead of by river, and this was a very expensive affair. Julian therefore revived the practice and considered it a serious matter should he not put the carriage of grain on its former footing. He quickly produced more ships than before and examined ways the river might be opened up for corn.

252. Julian, *Letter to the Athenians*, 279D

After this came the second and third years (of the campaign: AD 358–59). All the barbarians were driven out of the Gallic provinces, most of the cities were recovered, and large numbers of ships were brought over from Britain.

253. Ammianus Marcellinus (late 4th C. AD), XVIII, 2, 3, AD 359

He even constructed granaries in place of those burned, in which could be stored the supply of grain usually brought over from Britain.

254. Eunapius (4th C. AD), Fr. 12

When Julian invaded enemy territory and the Chamavi begged him to spare it as though it were friendly territory, Julian agreed. He ordered their king to come forward, and, when he did so and Julian saw him standing on the river bank, he went on board a boat, which he kept out of arrowshot, and spoke to the barbarians through an interpreter. Since they were prepared to carry out all his instructions, and Julian saw that from his own point of view peace was opportune and necessary – for without the cooperation of the Chamavi it was impossible for grain from the island of Britain to be transported to the Roman garrisons – he was induced by necessity to grant them peace, demanding hostages as a surety of their good faith.

255. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), III, 5, 2

At the far end of Germany where there is a province of Gaul, the Rhine flows into the Atlantic Ocean at a point on the coast 900 stadia (c. 103 miles) from Britain. Julian had timber gathered from the forests around the river and 800 boats larger than galleys built. These he sent to Britain and had them convey grain.

Though safe from the depredations of the Germans, Britain was not without her own enemies, and in 360 the diocese suffered a large-scale attack by the Picts and Scots. In response, Julian despatched Lupicinus and four units of the mobile field army:

256. **Ammianus Marcellinus, XX, 1**

Such was the course of events in Illyricum and the east. In Britain during the tenth consulship of Constantius and the third of Julian (AD 360) invasions by the fierce tribes of the Scots and the Picts, who had broken the peace they had agreed upon, were causing destruction in those areas near the frontiers, and the provinces, worn out by numerous disasters in the past, were caught in the grip of fear. The Caesar Julian, who was wintering at Paris and was preoccupied by various problems, was afraid to go to the assistance of those across the sea, as I have related Constans did, in case he left the Gallic provinces without a ruler at a time when the Alamanni were roused to savagery and war. He therefore decided that Lupicinus, who at that time was commander of the armed forces (*magister armorum*), should go to settle matters either by force or by negotiation. Lupicinus certainly had a talent for war and was skilled in military affairs, but he was extremely haughty and full of himself like a tragic actor, as they say, and it had long been a matter of dispute whether his avarice or his cruelty was the greater. So, with a light-armed auxiliary force composed of Aeruli (Heruli) and Batavians moved up, together with two units (*numeri*) from Moesia, this aforementioned general came to Bononia (Boulogne) in the depths of winter, and having procured vessels and embarked all his troops, he waited for a favourable wind and crossed to Rutupiae (Richborough) opposite. He then proceeded to London so that once he had formed his plans as the situation demanded, he might hasten into battle all the sooner.

Of Lupicinus' activities in Britain nothing is recorded, and any campaign he initiated was evidently cut short by his recall to the continent and subsequent arrest. In this way, Julian was seeking to forestall any support he might give to Constantius, with whom Julian was now set on a collision course as a result of being proclaimed Augustus by his troops. Constantius' timely death in 361, however, spared the empire yet another bout of ruinous civil war and left Julian master of the whole empire, but within two years he too had died in allegedly mysterious circumstances while leading a campaign against Persia. With him the dynasty of Constantius came to an end.

DANGER, DECLINE AND COLLAPSE

By 364, the empire was once again divided, this time between Valens in the east and his brother Valentinian in the west. In Britain there were renewed rumblings of pressure from beyond the frontiers.¹

257. Ammianus Marcellinus (late 4th C. AD), XXVI, 4, 5

At this time, with trumpets sounding for war as if through all the Roman world, the most savage tribes rose up and poured across the nearest frontiers. At one and the same time the Alamanni were plundering Gaul and Raetia, the Sarmatae and Quadri Pannonia; the Picts, Saxons, Scots and Attacotti harassed the Britons with continual calamities ...

The extent of the attacks in 364 or the means by which the Romans sought to counter them we do not know, but there is no mistaking the desperate straits to which Britain was reduced by the disaster of 367. For virtually the first time the enemy had learned to act in concert and rescuing the situation was to prove an uphill struggle.²

258. Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVII, 8

Valentinian had set out from Amiens and was hurrying towards Trier when he was overtaken by grave reports indicating that Britain had been plunged into the depths of distress by a conspiracy of the barbarians, that Nectaridus, Count of the coastal district, had been killed, and that the Duke Fullofaudes had been surrounded and captured in an enemy ambush. This news was received with great consternation and Valentinian sent Severus, who at that time was still Count of the household troops, to make good the reverses if chance gave him the desired opportunity. He, however, was recalled shortly afterwards, and Jovinus ... (lacuna) ... having set out to the same place was allowed by Valentinian to return quickly³ with the intention of securing the aid of a

powerful army. This he maintained was what the pressing needs demanded. Finally, as a result of the many frightening occurrences reported by constant rumours involving this same island, Theodosius was chosen and instructed to hasten there. He was a man with a very good reputation in military affairs, and having collected a force of young and spirited legionary and auxiliary troops he set off, preceded by an impressive show of confidence. And since, when I was compiling my account of the acts of the Emperor Constans, I set out to the best of my ability the motion of the Ocean's ebb and flow as well as the situation of Britain, I now consider it unnecessary to repeat what has been dealt with once, just as Homer's Ulysses shrinks from repeating his tale to the Phaeacians on account of the excessive difficulty. Suffice to say that at the time in question the Picts were divided into two tribes, the Dicalydones and the Verturiones. These, together with the warlike Attacotti and the Scots, were ranging over a wide area causing much devastation, while the Franks and their neighbours the Saxons ravaged the coast of Gaul with vicious acts of pillage, arson and the murder of all prisoners, wherever they could burst in by land or sea. In order to prevent these happenings, should better luck present an opportunity, that most efficient general made for the furthest point on the earth. On his arrival at the coast of Bononia (Boulogne), which is separated from the tract of land opposite by the narrows of the tidal sea, wont as it is to rise in astonishing surges and then, without any harm to those plying it, to subside until it has all the appearance of a plain, he made a quiet crossing of the Channel and landed at Rutupiae (Richborough), a quiet haven opposite. When the Batavi, Heruli, Jovii and Victores who were following him arrived, all of them units confident in their strength, Theodosius set out and made for London, an ancient city that later generations called Augusta. Dividing his troops into several detachments, he attacked the marauding enemy bands who were roaming about loaded down with the weight of their booty and, quickly routing those who were driving along prisoners and cattle, he wrested from them the plunder that the wretched subjects of Rome had lost. All this he restored to its owners with the exception of a small part, which was paid to his weary troops. Then, in the full flush of success, like someone celebrating an ovation, he entered the city, which up till now had floundered amidst the greatest of hardships, but suddenly had been restored before rescue could even have been hoped for. There he lingered in order to explore safe plans of action, encouraged by his great success to deeds of greater daring, but unsure of the future, since he had learned from the statements of prisoners and the information provided by deserters that this widely scattered enemy mass, made up of various tribes and indescribably savage, could only be overcome by more devious cunning and unexpected attacks. Finally, he issued proclamations, and with a promise of immunity from punishment he called back to their ranks those who had deserted, and many others who were straggling about the countryside on furlough. As a result of this edict very many were induced to return by the offer, and Theodosius, relieved of his anxieties, requested that Civilis, a man of sharp temper but steadfastly just and upright, be

sent to him to govern Britain on behalf of the Prefects, and also Dulcitius, a general distinguished for his expertise in military matters.

That part of Theodosius' action against the enemy included naval engagements is suggested by Claudian:

259. Claudian (late 4th C. AD), *Panegyric on the Third Consulship of Honorius*, 51–6

And so as to enflame you all the more with a love of battle, he would recount the deeds of your grandfather (the Elder Theodosius), before whom trembled the shores of sun-scorched Libya and Thule, beyond the reach of ships. He it was vanquished the nimble Moors and apt-named Picts; he pursued the Scots with his far-ranging sword; he cleft Hyperborean waves with courageous oars ...

260. Claudian, *Panegyric on the Fourth Consulship of Honorius*, 24–33

From here (Spain) came forth your grandfather (the Elder Theodosius), for whom, exultant after his northern battles, Africa wove laurels won from the Massyli. He it was pitched camp amid the frosts of Caledonia, in armour bore the summer heat of Libya, a source of terror to the Moor, conqueror of the British shore, laying waste to North and South alike. What profit (to the Britons) the eternal harshness and cold of their climate, or the uncharted seas? The Orkneys were drenched with slaughter of the Saxons; Thule was warm with Pictish blood, and icy Ireland wept for the heaps of Scottish dead.

cf.

261. Pacatus (late 4th C. AD), *Panegyric on Theodosius*, 5, 2

Shall I relate how Britain was brought to her knees by battles on land? In that case the Saxon, exhausted by naval engagements, springs to mind.⁴ Shall I speak of the Scots driven back to their own marshes?

Following restoration of the military situation, the immediate need was to repair the damage done and prevent a repetition:

262. Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII, 3

Theodosius, whose reputation as a general was of the highest order, set out from Augusta, previously known as London, in good spirits and accompanied by an

army he had assembled with energy and skill. To the troubled and disordered fortunes of the Britons he brought the greatest of assistance, everywhere securing in advance locations suited to ambushing the barbarians, and asking nothing of the rank and file in which he did not actively take the lead. In this way he combined the duties of a hard-working common soldier with the responsibilities of a distinguished general. Once he had routed and put to flight the various tribes which arrogance, fostered by impunity, was inciting to attack Roman property, he completely restored the cities and forts which, though founded to secure a lasting peace, had suffered repeated damage.

While Theodosius was occupied with this there occurred a serious instance of villainy that would have resulted in grave danger had it not been nipped in the bud. A certain Valentinus, a haughty character born in Valeria in Pannonia and brother-in-law to that pernicious Vicar Maximinus who was later Praetorian Prefect, had been exiled to Britain because of a serious crime. Like a dangerous animal he could not bear to be inactive and he stirred himself to acts of wickedness and revolution, nursing an intense feeling of dislike for Theodosius, whom he regarded as the only man capable of blocking his evil designs.

With much consideration of possibilities both open and secret, and with the force of his boundless ambition growing, he attempted to win over exiles and soldiers with promises of rewards for his enterprise as tempting as the moment allowed. The time for putting his plans into effect was already drawing close when Theodosius learned of them through a pre-arranged source and, being a general ever ready to take a bold course of action and resolutely determined to punish what he had discovered, he delivered up Valentinus together with a few of his closest associates to the Duke Dulcitius for the imposition of the death penalty. However, using his military expertise to make projections as to future developments – in this he surpassed all his contemporaries – he forbade the instigation of enquiries into the conspiracy in order to prevent fear from spreading widely and reawakening in the province those disturbances that had been lulled to sleep.

Then, with danger totally removed, since it was common knowledge that none of his undertakings lacked success, he turned to making many necessary reforms. He restored cities and the forts of the garrison, as already mentioned; he protected the frontiers with sentries and guards; he recovered a province which had fallen into the hands of the enemy and so completely restored it to its former state that, by his own account, it had a legally appointed governor, and was thereafter called Valentia⁵ by decision of the emperor who, on receipt of this priceless piece of news, felt as great a sense of joy as if he had been celebrating a triumph. In the midst of these outstanding events the Areani, an organisation of men set up in former times and about whom I have given some account in the history of Constans, had gradually fallen into bad habits, for which Theodosius removed them from their stations. They were clearly convicted of having been induced by the receipt or promise of great rewards to betray to the barbarians at various times what was happening on the Roman side. It was in fact their duty

to range far and wide over a large area and to inform the Roman commanders of disturbances among the neighbouring tribes.

After dealing with the aforementioned and other similar events in so spectacular a manner, Theodosius was summoned to court and left the provinces dancing for joy, having distinguished himself in a series of salutary victories like Furius Camillus or Cursor Papirius. With good will from every quarter he was escorted to the Channel, and crossing with a gentle wind he reached the Emperor's high command. There he was received with joy and praise and took over from Jovinus, who commanded the cavalry, but who was considered to be lacking in energy.

Probably to the period of Theodosius' restoration belongs the construction of watchtowers along the coast of Yorkshire from Filey to Huntcliff. From the Ravenscar site comes an isolated and semiliterate inscription:

263. *RIB*, I, 721

Justinianus, commander. Vindicianus master (masbier = magister?) built this tower and fort from ground-level.

A graphic picture of Roman naval operations at this time is presented by Vegetius, writing at the end of the fourth century:

264. Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris* (Abridgement of Military Affairs), IV, 37

As for size, the smallest galleys have a single bank of oars ... Associated with the larger galleys are scouting skiffs, which have around twenty oars on each side, and which the Britons call Picati (tar-daubed). These are intended to locate and at times intercept the passage of enemy ships and to discover by observation their arrival or plans. However, to prevent these scout vessels being easily visible through the brightness of their appearance, their sails and rigging are dyed sea-green, and even the pitch with which ships are ordinarily daubed is made that colour. The sailors and marines wear sea-green clothing so that as they go about their scouting they may escape detection the more easily not only by night but also by day.

In 372, Valentinian transferred to Britain a king of the Alamanni:

265. Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 4, 7

In place of Macrianus Valentinian made Fraomarius king of the Bucinobantes, a tribe of the Alamanni opposite Mainz. A little later, however, because a recent

invasion had totally devastated that same district, he transferred him to Britain with the rank of Tribune, and put him in charge of what was then a large and powerful contingent of the Alamanni.

Following the death of Valentinian in 375, the throne of the Western Empire passed to his sons Gratian and Valentinian II, the latter being but four years old at the time. Under Gratian, however, relations between the Emperor and the aristocracy and army were to undergo a rapid and profound deterioration leading in 383 to a rebellion that had its origins with Magnus Maximus⁶ commanding forces in Britain:

266. *Chronicle of 452*,⁷ AD 382

Maximus promptly overcame the Picts and Scots who were engaged in making attacks.

267. Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 34, 9–10

Maximus, a man vigorous in action, upright, and worthy of imperial honours had he not risen to prominence by breaking his oath of loyalty and an illegal assumption of power, was created emperor by the army in Britain almost against his will. He then crossed to Gaul.

There he treacherously surrounded and killed the emperor Gratian, who was terrified by this sudden attack and was considering crossing into Italy.

268. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), IV, 35, 2–6 and 37, 1–3

35 Such was the situation in Thrace. Gratian, however, was surrounded by serious difficulties of a kind that could not easily be endured for long. Following the advice of those courtiers who make a habit of leading emperors astray, he had received certain Alan deserters, enrolled them in his army, rewarded them with generous bounties, and deemed them worthy of responsibility for matters of the greatest importance, while paying his own soldiers scant regard. This engendered in the soldiers a hatred of the Emperor which smouldered away, grew worse, and stirred up in them a desire to rebel – especially in the case of those stationed in Britain, who were steeped more than all others in surliness and anger. In this they were encouraged still further by Maximus, a native of Spain who had served with the Emperor⁸ Theodosius in Britain. Peeved because Theodosius was considered worthy of the throne while he himself had not been promoted even to an honorific office, Maximus further roused the soldiers to hatred against the Emperor. They for their part were quick to rebel and proclaim Maximus Emperor.

They presented him with the purple robe and diadem, and promptly sailed across Ocean, putting in at the mouths of the Rhine. When the armies in Germany and beyond readily accepted the nomination, Gratian confronted Maximus in battle ... (Gratian was then gradually deserted by his troops, who went over to Maximus, and forced to flee towards the Alps and the Danube provinces. Maximus sent his cavalry commander, Andragathius, after him) ... Andragathius caught Gratian as he was about to cross the bridge at Sigidunum (Belgrade),⁹ killed him, and thereby confirmed the rule of Maximus.

- 37 Such was the end of Gratian's reign. Maximus for his part believed his hold on the throne was secure, and sent an embassy to Theodosius, not begging forgiveness for what he had done to Gratian, but with a somewhat harsh and arrogant message ... The embassy demanded of Theodosius a truce, concord, and joint action against all enemies of Rome; otherwise he threatened hostility and war. The Emperor Theodosius accepted Maximus as Emperor ... but he secretly set about preparing for war against him, while employing every manner of flattery and solicitude to beguile him.

269. Gold solidus, *RIC*, IX, p. 2, no. 2b



Obverse

D(ominus) N(oster) (Our Lord) Mag(nus) Maximus P(ius) F(elix) Aug(ustus)

Reverse

Victoria Augg (Victory of the two Augusti)

While Maximus' victory over Gratian left him as de-facto ruler of the western dioceses comprising Britain, Gaul and Spain, in Italy the young Valentinian II continued to maintain the vestiges of legitimate authority, largely as a result of Maximus' reluctance to provoke the intervention of Theodosius in the east:

270. *Chronicle of 452*, AD 383

Fearing Theodosius, the head of the Eastern Empire, Maximus made a treaty with Valentinian.

The existence of Valentinian, however, must have represented in Maximus' eyes an ever-present indictment of his rise to power, and the final obstacle to

de jure acceptance of his rule. Thus, though it was factors of church administration that provided the pretext for Maximus' invasion of Italy in 387 to secure total control of the west, the true political reasons cannot have been far below the surface:

271. Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 34, 10

Maximus drove Gratian's brother, the Emperor Valentinian, out of Italy. Valentinian took refuge in the east, where he was received by Theodosius with fatherly affection and shortly restored to power.

272. *Chronicle of 452*, AD 387

Alleging that the Church was being subjected to intolerable treatment, Maximus found the opportunity to break the pact he had made with Valentinian. Valentinian for his part was afraid of the usurper, who was now threatening his life, and fled to Theodosius for refuge.

273. Sozomenus (5th C. AD), *Ecclesiastical History*, VII, 13

In the meantime, Maximus gathered a very large army of Britons, neighbouring Gauls, Celts and the tribes thereabouts and entered Italy. His pretext was to prevent any innovation in the national religion and ecclesiastical order. In reality it was to clear himself of the imputation of usurpation.

Faced with Maximus' attack upon what remained of the legitimate Western Empire, Theodosius in the east now had no alternative but to intervene. The final and decisive engagement between the forces of Maximus and Theodosius took place in 388 at Aquileia:

274. Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 35, 3-4

At that time Maximus occupied Aquileia, an onlooker at his own victory, while his Count, Andragathius, exercised supreme command of the war. The latter, contrary to expectation, had secured all the entrances to the Alps and the rivers with enormous military forces and a determination that excelled even the valour of his great forces. Then, through the incomprehensible will of God, while he was preparing to catch his enemies off their guard and to overwhelm them with a naval expedition, of his own accord he deserted those same defensive positions he had constructed to block the access routes.

And so, before anyone could realise, not to mention offer any resistance, Theodosius crossed the unguarded Alps and on his unexpected arrival before Aquileia besieged that great and fierce enemy Maximus, who by the terror of his name alone exacted tribute and dues from the savage German tribes, and without recourse to any underhand device, took him prisoner and put him to death.

275. Prosper Tiro (5th C. AD), *Chronicon*, 1191 (AD 388)

In the reign of Valentinian and Theodosius the usurper Maximus was seized three miles from Aquileia, deprived of his royal clothing and condemned to death. In the same year his son Victor was killed in Gaul by the Count Arbogast, a Frank by birth.

According to the sixth-century writer Gildas, as part of his continental adventure Maximus withdrew a part of Britain's garrison, which never thereafter returned. As a result the provinces became once again subject to the depredations of the Picts and Scots until appeals for help were eventually answered:

276. Gildas¹⁰ (6th C. AD), *De excidio Britanniae (On the Destruction of Britain)*, 14–15

- 14 Thereafter Britain was robbed of all her armed forces, her military supplies, her rulers, cruel as they were, her sturdy youth. They followed in the steps of the usurper mentioned above (Maximus), and never afterwards returned. Totally ignorant of all the usages of war, Britain remained for many years groaning in a state of shock, exposed for the first time to two foreign tribes of extreme cruelty, the Scots from the north-west, the Picts from the north.
- 15 As a result of their attacks and terrible depredations Britain sent envoys to Rome with letters, making tearful appeals for an armed force to give protection, and promising unwavering and whole-hearted submission to Roman rule, if only the enemy could be kept at a greater distance. Forgetting previous ills, Rome soon prepared a legion, soundly equipped with arms. Crossing over Ocean to Britain in ships it engaged the fierce enemy, and killing a great number drove them all from the place, freeing from imminent slavery a people that had been subjected to such dreadful mangling. The Britons were instructed to build a wall across the island from sea to sea so that when manned it might be a deterrent to keep away the enemy and a means of protection for the people. The wall, however, being built not of stone but of turf, proved useless to the unthinking and leaderless masses.¹¹

The death of Valentinian II in suspicious circumstances during 392 led to yet more imperial usurpation in the Western Empire which Theodosius was not able to halt until 394. By the end of January 395, however, he too was dead and the empire divided between his sons, Honorius in the west and Arcadius in the east. Real power throughout the empire, however, lay by now with the general Stilicho, and despite the ‘official’ attribution of responsibility it is under his aegis that the court poet Claudian mentions new victories at sea and on land in 398:

277. *Against Eutropius, I, 391–3*

Then Rome speaks thus: ‘Factors near at hand proclaim how great my power is now you (Honorius) are Emperor. With the Saxons subjugated the sea is now more peaceful, with the Picts broken Britain is secure.’

The following year, we hear of further strengthening of Britain’s position:

278. *Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho (delivered early 400), II, 247–55*

Next spoke Britannia, dressed in the skin of some Caledonian beast, her cheeks tattooed, her sea-blue mantle sweeping over her footsteps like the surge of Ocean: ‘I too, when on the point of death at the hands of neighbouring tribes, found in Stilicho protection, when the Scots roused all Ireland and the sea foamed beneath hostile oars. His care ensured I need not fear the missiles of the Scots, nor tremble at the Picts, nor watch on all my shores for Saxons to arrive with every shifting wind.’

Is it with this, as some¹² have suggested, that we should identify Gildas’ description of a second campaign in Britain?

279. *Gildas, De excidio Britanniae (On the Destruction of Britain), 16–17*

16 The legion (i.e. the one sent after Maximus’ fall) was returning home in triumph and with great joy, when (suddenly), like predatory wolves driven mad by the extremes of hunger that leap dry-mouthed into the sheepfold when the shepherd is away, the old enemy burst over the frontiers, borne along by their oars like wings, by the arms of their oarsmen, by their sails swelling in the wind. Everything they slaughtered – whatever lay in their path they cut down like ripe corn, trampled underfoot, and passed on.

17 So, once more plaintive envoys were sent, their clothes torn, so it is said, their heads covered in dust. Cowering like frightened chicks beneath the

trusty wings of their parents, they beg the Romans for help lest their wretched homeland be utterly destroyed, and the Roman name, which echoed in their ears merely as a word, became a thing without worth and gnawed at by the insolent taunts of foreign tribes. The Romans, moved as much as is humanly possible by the tale of such tragedy, hastened the eagle-like flight of their cavalry on land and the passage of their sailors at sea, and into the necks of their enemies they plunged the talons of their sword-points, talons that at first were unexpected and at length a source of dread. The slaughter they inflict is like the fall of leaves in autumn, like a mountain torrent that swollen after storms by numerous tributaries overflows its riverbed in its noisy course. With furrowed back and fierce brow it foams wondrously, its waves surging to the clouds, as the saying goes, waves by which the eyes, though constantly refreshed by blinking, are dazzled by colliding lines of eddies, and with a single surge it overwhelms all obstacles in its path. Thus did our glorious allies quickly put to flight across the sea such enemy hordes as could escape; for year by year it was across the sea they piled up booty with no one to resist them.

Again, Gildas follows his description of Roman successes with an account of further wall building:

280. Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae* (*On the Destruction of Britain*), 18

The Romans therefore informed our homeland that they could not go on being thus plagued at frequent intervals for expeditions that required so much effort, nor could the marks of Roman power, that great and glorious army, be worn out by land and sea on account of unwarlike and roving bandits. Rather they urge the Britons to stand on their own two feet, to get accustomed to bearing arms, to fight bravely, and in this way protect with all their strength their land, property, wives, children and, what is more important, their lives and liberty. They should not hold out their hands devoid of weapons, ready to be shackled by tribes that were in no way stronger than themselves, but rather hands armed with shields, swords and spears, and ready to kill. So too, in the belief that it would bring some advantage to a people they were to abandon, the Romans built a wall, different from the other, using public and private funds, linking the wretched inhabitants to themselves. They constructed it in their usual fashion: a straight line from sea to sea between cities which happened to have been placed there through fear of the enemy. To the timorous people they gave bold advice and left them manuals on training in the use of arms. They also placed towers overlooking the sea at intervals on the coast to the south where they kept their ships,¹³ since there too they feared the savage barbarian beasts. They then bade the Britons farewell, as if intending never to return.

For all the mounting pressures that threatened the boundaries of the continental empire, so long as the central government felt itself able to divert resources to the protection of Britain, the island might continue to look to an effective defence against its foes. By 402, however, the situation had become reversed, and Britain was now a source of troops to defend the empire's heart:

281. Claudian, *Gothic War*, 416–18

There also came the legion set to guard the furthest Britons, the legion that curbs the savage Scot and scans the lifeless patterns tattooed on dying Picts.

The immediate reaction of the diocese to the loss of defending forces finds no mention in surviving sources, but by the end of 406 the critical situation on the continent produced within Britain an ostensibly fevered rash of usurpers:¹⁴

282. Zosimus (5th–6th C. AD), VI, 3, 1

Earlier, when Arcadius was consul for the sixth time along with Probus (AD 406), the Vandals joined forces with the Suebi and Alans, and sweeping over this area devastated the Transalpine tribes.¹⁵ Such was the slaughter they inflicted that they inspired terror even among the forces in Britain, who were then forced through fear the barbarians might advance against them into electing usurpers, that is Marcus, Gratian, and after them Constantine.

283. Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 40, 4

While these tribes were rampaging through Gaul, in Britain Gratian, a citizen of the island, was illegally made Emperor and killed. In his place Constantine was elected from the lowest ranks of the military, solely on the basis of the hope engendered by his name, and not because of any valour he had.¹⁶ As soon as he assumed power he crossed to Gaul. There he was frequently tricked by worthless pacts with the barbarians and was the cause of great harm to the state.

284. Zosimus,¹⁷ VI, 2–5

- 2 While Arcadius was still Emperor, and Honorius and Theodosius were consuls for the seventh and second times respectively (AD 407), the soldiers in Britain rebelled, elevated Marcus to the imperial throne, and gave him their obedience as ruler there. However, because he was not in tune with their ways, they put him to death, promoted Gratian and, granting him the purple robe and crown, formed a bodyguard for him as they would an emperor. However, not finding him to their liking either, they deposed him and put

him to death after four months and gave the throne to Constantine. He in turn, after placing Justinian and Neviogastes in command of the Celtic forces, left Britain and crossed the Channel. On his arrival at Bononia (Boulogne), this being the nearest city on the coast and situated in Lower Germany, he remained there for some days, and having won over all the forces as far as the Alps, which form the boundary between Gaul and Italy, he considered his hold on the throne was secure.¹⁸ About this time, Stilicho despatched the general Sarus, together with an army, against Constantine, and in an engagement with the general Justinian and the forces with him Sarus destroyed Justinian and the greater part of his troops. As a result he came into possession of a great store of booty, and being informed that Constantine himself had seized the city of Valentia, which ensured his safety, he set about besieging the place. The remaining general, Neviogastes, entered into talks with Sarus about a pact of friendship and was received by him as a friend, but having exchanged oaths Neviogastes was immediately put to death, since Sarus put no store by the oaths. To the position of general Constantine now appointed Ediovinchus, a Frank by birth, and Gerontius, a native of Britain. Sarus for his part, fearing the experience of these generals in war and their courage, withdrew from Valentia, which he had besieged for seven days. He was, however, sorely pressed by Constantine's generals and it was only with a good deal of effort that he extricated himself ... (Sarus is forced to use the booty he had earlier seized to ease a way into Italy. Constantine then secures his hold on the Alps) ...

- 4 Having thus arranged matters through all of Gaul, Constantine sent Constans, the elder of his sons whom he had invested with the rank of Caesar, into Spain (AD 408). This he did as a result of his desire to gain control of all the tribes there, and thus to increase his domain, and at the same time to eradicate the power of Honorius' kinsfolk there ... (Constantine in fact feared a twofold attack on him by forces loyal to Honorius: one from Spain, the other from Italy) ...
- 5 Having accomplished these objectives in Spain, Constans returned to his father Constantine bringing with him Verenianus and Didymus and leaving there the general Gerontius ...

285. Zosimus, V, 43

At this the usurper Constantine sent eunuchs to Honorius begging pardon for deigning to assume the rank of emperor. He alleged that he had not purposely chosen to do so, but that it was a result of the constraints brought to bear on him by the soldiers. Upon hearing this request and seeing that it was not easy for him to contemplate other wars, with Alaric's barbarians not far away and also his kinsmen being held by the usurper, Honorius gave in to the request and sent Constantine the imperial apparel (AD 409). Honorius' concern for his kinsmen was in fact futile since they had been put to death prior to this embassy.

286. Zosimus, VI, 1

And so, with his altogether reasonable requests having been insultingly turned down, Alaric advanced on Rome with all his forces, determined to lay siege to it. At this there came to Honorius an envoy from Constantine, who had usurped power among the Celts, one Jovius, a man outstanding by reason of his education and other virtues. He asked that the peace which had previously been agreed upon be confirmed and at the same time he begged forgiveness for the murder of Didymus and Verenianus, kinsmen of the Emperor Honorius. He alleged by way of excuse that they had been put to death against the wishes of Constantine. Seeing that Honorius was disturbed by this, Jovius said it would be sensible for the emperor, embroiled with the problems of Italy as he was, to give in to Constantine. If he were allowed to return to Constantine and report the situation in Italy, he would soon return with him in person together with all the Celtic, Spanish and British forces to resolve the crisis in Italy and Rome. On these terms Jovius was allowed to depart.¹⁹

287. Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos (Against the Pagans)*, VII, 42, 1–4

In the 1165th year after the foundation of Rome (AD 410) the Emperor Honorius, seeing that no action could be taken against the barbarians with so many usurpers rising up against him, ordered that the usurpers themselves be disposed of as a first move. The supreme command in this war was entrusted to the Count Constantius ... Therefore Count Constantius set out to Gaul with an army, besieged the Emperor Constantine at Arles (the new capital of the Prefecture of the Gauls), took him prisoner, and put him to death (AD 411). At this point ... Constantine's son Constans was killed at Vienne by his Count Gerontius,²⁰ a man more given to evil than to virtue, who then set up a certain Maximus in Constans' place. Gerontius himself was slain by his own soldiers.

For Britain the continental adventure of Constantine, which at its inception was perhaps regarded as a means of maintaining the island as part of a stable north-west Prefecture, became the event that finally sundered direct Roman rule. Already there had been a renewal of Saxon attacks (*Chronicle of 452* §286 n.19), and while Gerontius stirred up revolt against Constantine in Gaul, fresh onslaughts induced the Britons to throw off their allegiance to the usurper:

288. Zosimus, VI, 5, 2–3

The barbarians beyond the Rhine, attacking in force, reduced the inhabitants of Britain and some of the Celtic tribes to the point where they were obliged to throw off Roman rule and live independently, no longer subject to Roman laws.

The Britons therefore took up arms and, braving the danger on their own behalf, freed their cities from the barbarians threatening them. And all Armorica (Brittany) and the other Gallic provinces followed their example, freed themselves in the same way, expelled their Roman rulers and set up their own governments as far as lay within their power.

That it was Constantine's administration rather than the government of Honorius that Britain repudiated would be given additional weight could we accept the implications of the Emperor's rescript:

289. Zosimus, VI, 10, 2

Honorius wrote letters to the cities in Britain bidding them to take precautions on their own behalf.²¹

From this point on, Roman rule in Britain ceased for ever, and while for a time life undoubtedly continued much as before, the renewal of attacks from outside prompted first a final and unanswered appeal for Roman assistance and then the fateful invitation to the Saxons. Gildas' narrative resumes after the building of the second wall:

290. Gildas, *De excidio Britanniae (On the Destruction of Britain)* 19–26

19 And so, as the Romans returned home, the loathsome hordes of Scots and Picts eagerly emerged from the coracles that carried them across the gulf of the sea, like dark swarms of worms that emerge from the narrow crevices of their holes when the sun is high and the weather grows warm. In custom they differed slightly one from another, yet in their single desire for shedding blood they were of one accord, preferring to cover their villainous faces with hair, rather than their private parts and surrounding areas with clothes. Once they learned of the Romans' departure and their refusal to return, more confident than ever, they seized as settlers the whole northern part of the country as far as the wall. To resist them an army was posted on the top of the fortification, an army reluctant to fight, incapable of flight, feckless through the timorousness of their hearts, an army that day and night languished in senseless idleness. Meanwhile the barbed spears of their naked enemies saw no rest; the wretched citizens were dragged from the walls by them and dashed to the ground. And yet this sentence of untimely death was in fact a blessing for those snatched away by such a fate; for by their sudden end they avoided the wretched torment that hung over their brothers and children. What more can I say? The townships and high wall are abandoned;

once again the citizens are put to flight; once again are scattered with less hope of recovery than usual; once again they are pursued by the enemy; once again massacres yet more cruel hasten upon them. The pitiful citizens are torn to pieces by their foes like lambs by butchers. Indeed their lives might be likened to those of wild animals; for they began to keep one another in check by plundering one another of the meagre provisions the wretched citizens possessed as a short-term means of sustenance. Their internal tumults only served in fact to increase their misfortunes from without, since as a consequence of this constant plundering the whole country was being stripped of every bit of food with the exception of the relief that skill in hunting could provide.

- 20 So again the miserable remnants sent a letter to Agitius,²² a man of high rank among the Romans, in the following terms: 'To Agitius, Consul for the third time (AD 446) come the groans of the Britons', and a little further on came the complaint 'The barbarians drive us to the sea; the sea drives us back to the barbarians; between these two forms of death we are either slaughtered or drowned'. Yet for all their pleas they got no help. Meanwhile a dread and infamous famine gripped the Britons as they wandered about enfeebled; it forced many of them to surrender to the bloodthirsty brigands without delay in order to get some scrap of food to revive them. Not so others, however; instead they continued the resistance from the mountains themselves, from caves, passes, and dense thickets. Then, placing their trust not in man but in God – as in that saying of Philo: 'When human help ceases, we need the help of God' – for the first time they inflicted serious defeats upon the enemy, who for many years had plundered the land. For a while the insolence of their enemies abated, but not our people's wickedness. The enemy withdrew from our citizens, but they in turn did not draw back from their sins.
- 21 ... Therefore the shameless Irish robbers returned home, though intending to return shortly, while the Picts in the furthest part of the island then for the first time and for some time thereafter remained inactive, though they occasionally engaged in forays and plundering raids ... However, as the devastation settled down, the island began to overflow with such an abundance of riches that no previous period could recall the like, but with these manifold riches came an increase in luxury. 'Reports of such fornication indeed as is not known even among the gentiles.' It was not only this vice that flourished, but all those to which human nature is liable, and especially that which even now overturns every good condition: hatred of truth and those who defend it, love of falsehood and those who contrive it, the adoption of evil instead of good, reverence for wickedness rather than kindness, a desire for darkness rather than the sun ... (Kings noted for their cruelty are created and deposed only to be replaced by worse examples) ... If indeed any of them appeared more kindly and to some degree more truthful, against him all would brandish the darts of their hatred without a second thought, as though he wished to subvert Britain ... And this was the behaviour not only of men of the world but even of the Lord's flock and their pastors, who should have

been an example to all the people. In great numbers they wallowed besotted by drunkenness as if soaked in wine, worn out by swelling enmities, contentious disputes, by the grasping talons of envy and a judgment that could not distinguish good from bad ...

- 22 Meanwhile God desired to purge his family ... (reports of fresh attacks by foreign enemies are received) ... A deadly plague pressed heavily upon the stupid people and within a short span laid low without recourse to the sword so large a number of them that the living could not bury the dead ... A council is convened to decide the best and safest means of repelling such fierce and frequent attacks and plundering by the aforementioned tribes.
- 23 Then all the members of the council together with the proud tyrant²³ are blinded; for the protection they find – or rather the means of their homeland's destruction – is to admit into the island, like wolves into the fold, those fierce Saxons – an accursed name – hated as they were by God and men, admit them to repel the northern tribes ... Then a brood of cubs breaks forth from the lair of the barbaric lioness, borne along in three 'cylae', as they call warships in their language ... On the orders of that ill-fated tyrant they first fixed their terrible claws in the eastern part of the island as if intent upon fighting for the country, but in fact to attack it. To these the mother lioness, learning her first contingent has prospered, sends another larger load of accomplice dogs ... Then the barbarians, admitted into the island, succeed in having supplies given them as if they were soldiers about to undergo great toils on behalf of their worthy hosts – such were their lies ... They again complain the monthly rations accorded them are not enough, deliberately colouring their case, and declare that unless greater liberality is heaped upon them, they will break their treaty and plunder the whole island. Without delay they follow up their threats with deeds.
- 24 In just retribution for former crimes there spread from sea to sea a fire heaped up by the hand of the impious easterners. It devastated all the towns and countryside round about, and once alight did not subside until it had burned almost the whole surface of the island, and was licking the western ocean with its savage red tongue ... Thus were all the settlements thrown to the ground by the frequent battering of the rams, and all the inhabitants along with church leaders, priests, and people laid low as sword points gleamed all around and flames crackled ...
- 25 And so, some of the wretched remnants, being caught in the mountains, were slaughtered in heaps; others, worn out by famine, came and surrendered to the enemy to be their slaves forever – if they were not butchered on the spot, something that was the highest boon; others still made for lands across the seas with great lamentation ... while others, though fearful, held out in their homeland, placing their trust in the high hills, overhanging, steep, and fortified, in the densest forests, and in the sea cliffs, their minds forever in a state of apprehension. After a time the cruel plunderers returned home. To the remnants (of the Britons), given strength by God, flocked the

wretched citizens from all directions ... begging God with one accord ... that they might not everywhere be utterly exterminated. Under the leadership of Ambrosius Aurelianus, a sober man, who perhaps alone of the Romans had survived the shock of so great a storm, a storm in which his parents, who had surely worn the purple, had perished ... they recovered their strength and challenged the victorious Saxons to battle. The Lord assented and the victory fell to them.

- 26 And so, from that time on sometimes our countrymen proved victorious, sometimes the enemy ... until the year that saw the siege of Mt. Badon, pretty well the last but not the least slaughter inflicted on the villains. It is now 43 years and one month since then, as I know, since it was the year of my birth.²⁴

Part III

RELIGION, GOVERNMENT, COMMERCE AND SOCIETY

RELIGION

For Rome, ruling an empire that was a patchwork of tribes and nations, each worshipping one or, more usually, a diverse range of gods and supernatural powers, mutual tolerance in matters of religion was not only a sensible expedient, but also a natural result of her own practical approach to the divine. As polytheists, the Romans did not concern themselves with setting an upper limit upon the number of gods there might be in the world. Where possible they aimed to equate what they found within provinces with what was already familiar to them. At the same time, their essentially pragmatic attitude to their own gods could readily be expanded to provide a focus for demonstrations of political loyalty among provincial populations. In only two respects did the practicalities of tolerance break down: the monotheistic systems which refused the simple expression of loyalty contained in sacrifice to Rome's gods and those systems such as druidism whose rituals were deemed to endanger public order and the rule of Roman law.

The official cults¹

Professions of loyalty by both Roman and native might take many forms. For the army, dedications were frequently centred upon Jupiter himself, either alone or linked to the *Numen* of the Emperor, his guiding spirit or divine power:

291. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 815)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, and to the divine power of the Emperor, the 1st Cohort of Spaniards set this up.

292. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 816)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, the 1st Cohort of Spaniards, part-mounted, under the command of the Prefect Lucius Antistius Lupus Verianus, son of Lucius, of the Quirine voting-tribe, from Sicca in Africa (set this up).

293. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 817)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, the 1st Cohort of Spaniards under the command of the Tribune Gaius Caballius Priscus (set this up).

294. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 818)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, Gaius Caballius Priscus, Tribune, (set this up).

295. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 824)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, and to the divine power of the Emperor, Marcus Maenius Agrippa, Tribune, set this up.

296. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 830)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, the 1st Cohort of Baetasii, Roman Citizens, under the command of the Prefect Titus Attius Tutor, willingly, gladly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.

297. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 831)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, the 1st Cohort of Dalmatians, under the command of the Prefect Lucius Caecilius Vegetus, willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.
cf.

298. From Risingham (*RIB*, I, 1227)

To the divine power of the Emperors, the 4th Cohort of Gauls, part-mounted, made this.

299. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 152)

This holy place, which was wrecked through insolence, Gaius Severius Emeritus, Centurion in charge of the region, has cleansed afresh and restored to the virtue and divine power of the Emperor.

In other cases altars were erected for the welfare of the Emperor and his family:

300. From Old Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 897)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, for the safety of the Emperor Marcus Antonius Gordianus Pius Felix, the Unconquered Augustus, his wife Sabinia Furia Tranquillina and their whole Divine House, the cavalry squadron called Augusta

Gordiana by virtue of its valour, under the command of Aemilius Crispinus, Prefect of cavalry, born in the Province of Africa, from Tusdrus, set this up under the direction of Nonius Philippus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, in the consulship of Atticus and Praetextatus.

Alternatively the emphasis might be on other gods and divine personifications:

301. From Bewcastle (*RIB*, I, 990)

To the Discipline of the Emperor.

302. From Carvoran (*RIB*, I, 1778)

To the Fortune of the Emperor (and) for the welfare of Lucius Aelius Caesar, Titus Flavius Secundus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Hamian archers, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow because of a vision.

303. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 838)

To Military Mars, the 1st Cohort of Baetasii, Roman Citizens, under the command of the Prefect Ulpian Titianus, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.

304. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 842)

To the Emperor's Victory, the 1st Cohort of Baetasii, Roman Citizens, under the command of the Prefect Titus Attius Tutor, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.

Declarations of loyalty from the native population of Britain on the other hand seem to have had as their focal point not the Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva that served in other provinces, or even Rome itself and the Emperor's Spirit, but rather the more immediate expression of Roman power, the Emperor himself, exemplified by the Temple of Claudius at Colchester. Though it is usually argued that the temple was not constructed until after Claudius' death,² thus continuing Roman 'official' policy of ascribing divine honours only to deceased emperors, the practice of allowing provincials to venerate a living ruler, which had been adopted by Augustus from earlier eastern customs, was doubtless of value in Britain too:

305. Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd C. AD), LI, 20, 6–8, 29 BC

Meanwhile, in addition to other business he dealt with, Caesar (Augustus) gave permission for sacred precincts to be set up in both Ephesus and Nicaea,

dedicated to Rome and his father (Julius) Caesar, to whom he had given the title, the Divine Julius. These cities at that time held preeminent positions in Asia and Bithynia respectively. The Romans who lived there he bade pay honour to these two divinities, but he allowed the provincials, whom he styled Greeks, to consecrate precincts to himself, the Asians in Pergamum, the Bithynians in Nicomedia. From such a beginning this practice has also occurred under other emperors, and not only in the Greek provinces but also in the others that are subject to Rome. In the city of Rome itself and the rest of Italy, however, no emperor, no matter how deserving of praise, has dared to do this (i.e. style himself a god). Yet even there divine honours are accorded and shrines set up to emperors who have ruled well, after their demise.

To carry out the necessary rituals of this imperial cult colleges of six priests were established, the *Seviri Augustales*, drawn largely from freedmen, as Lunaris' names declare him to be:

**306. From Bordeaux (*JRS*, 11 [1921], pp. 101–7),
AD 237**

To the protecting goddess Boudig, Marcus Aurelius Lunaris, Sevir of Augustus in the colonies of York and Lincoln in the Province of Britannia Inferior, (dedicated) this altar which he vowed when he set out from York. He willingly and deservedly pays his vow. (In the consulship of) Perpetuus and Cornelianus.
cf.

307. From York (*RIB*, I, 678)

Marcus Verecundius Diogenes, Sevir of the colony of York and *moritex*,³ tribesman of the Bituriges Cubi, set this up for himself during his lifetime.

Though designed to foster loyalty, it is clear that the temple of Claudius soon became for the participants of the Boudiccan rebellion a symbol of Roman oppression and economic depredations (Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 31, §73).

The native cults

Celtic religion in all its varied manifestations was rooted firmly in the world of nature. For classical writers, however, the fascination that inspired description after description lay not in the gods themselves so much as in those who officiated at the rituals, the Druids. Yet for all the volume of information available on the subject, there is much about the Druids that remains uncertain: their exact relationship to Celtic beliefs, the extent of their religious power in the Roman

period and the degree of their connection with anti-Roman sentiment.⁴ The earliest extant account is that of Caesar in the middle of the first century BC speaking of the Druids in Gaul:

308. Caesar, *Gallie War*, VI, 13–18

- 13 Throughout Gaul there are two classes of men who are of some account and are held in esteem. The common people are considered virtually as slaves, never daring to do anything on their own initiative and never consulted on any matter. Most of them, overwhelmed with debt or heavy taxation or oppressed by the injustices of those more powerful, surrender themselves to the service of nobles, who have the same rights over them as masters do over slaves. Of the two classes mentioned one consists of Druids, the other of Knights. The former officiate at religious ceremonies, supervise public and private sacrifices, and expound on religious questions. Large numbers of young men flock to them for instruction, and regard them with great respect. In fact they hand down decisions on almost all public and private disputes,⁵ and if any crime is committed or murder done, or if there is some dispute over inheritance or boundaries, it is they who decide the issue and determine the compensation or penalty. If any individual or tribe does not abide by their decision, they are banned from sacrifices. This is regarded by them as the heaviest possible penalty, and those under such a ban are reckoned to be impious criminals: everyone shuns them, avoids going near them or speaking to them, in case they come to some harm through contact with them. If they seek redress, they are denied justice, and they are refused all honours. Over all the Druids, however, there is one who presides and has supreme authority. On his death, if there is anyone of surpassing merit among those remaining, he succeeds; but if a number of them are of equal standing, the matter is put to the vote among the Druids, and on occasion they even fight over the leadership by force of arms. At a fixed time of the year the Druids hold session at a consecrated spot in the territory of the Carnutes, which is considered to be the centre of all Gaul. To this place come all those who have disputes, and they accept their decrees and decisions. It is thought that the druidic system was invented in Britain and then imported into Gaul. There it is that those wishing to make a more detailed study of it generally go to learn.
- 14 The Druids do not normally take part in war and are not subject to taxation like the rest; they enjoy exemption from military service and immunity to all liabilities. With the attraction of such privileges many come to learn of their own volition, or are sent by their parents and relatives. The students reportedly learn a great number of verses by heart, and for this reason many remain under instruction for twenty years. They regard it as contrary to their religious beliefs to commit their teachings to writing, though in almost all other matters such as public and private accounts they use the Greek

alphabet. This rule I think was introduced for two reasons: they did not want the teachings to be disseminated among the masses, nor did they wish their students to rely on the written word and thus pay less attention to the development of their memories. This in fact generally happens to most people: once they have the assistance of written texts, they relax their memories and their application to learning things by heart. A belief they particularly wish to inculcate is that the soul does not perish, but after death passes from one person to another. This they think is the greatest incentive to bravery, if fear of death is thereby minimised. They also engage in much discussion about the stars and their motion, the size of the universe and the earth, the composition of the world, and the strength and power of the immortal gods, all of which they hand on to the young men.

- 15 The other class consists of the Knights. When war breaks out and they are needed – before Caesar’s arrival it was almost a yearly occurrence for the Gauls to be engaged in making raids or repelling them – they all engage in it, and each has a band of vassals and retainers about him in accordance with his birth and wealth. This is the only criterion of dignity and power they recognise.
- 16 The Gallic nation as a whole is very much devoted to religion. For this reason those affected by more serious diseases or engaged in the dangers of battle either offer or promise to offer human sacrifice, and they employ Druids to act for them in this. They believe in fact that unless one life is given for another, the power of the immortal gods cannot be appeased, and they also have organised sacrifices of the same kind on behalf of the state. Others use enormous figures, the limbs of which, woven out of pliant twigs, they fill with living men. They are then set alight and the men perish, engulfed in the flames. The execution of those caught in the act of theft or brigandage or some other crime is considered more pleasing to the immortal gods, but when there is a shortage of people of this type they resort to executing even those guilty of no offence.
- 17 They worship Mercury most of all and have very many images of him, regarding him as the inventor of all crafts, their guide on all journeys, and they consider him to be especially important for the acquisition of money in trade. After him they worship Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva,⁶ about whom they hold much the same ideas as do other races: that Apollo dispels disease, that Minerva teaches the principles of arts and crafts, that Jupiter reigns in heaven, that Mars is Lord of warfare, and it is to him, when they have decided to fight a battle, that they generally promise the booty they look forward to taking. When they are victorious, they sacrifice the captured animals and assemble their other booty in one spot. One can see large piles of such material at consecrated places in many tribal areas, and it rarely happens that anyone dares, in defiance of religion, either to hide booty in his house or to remove anything once placed in position (on the pile). For such an act is assigned the severest of penalties accompanied by torture.

18 The Gauls declare that they are all descended from Father Dis, and they claim that this is the tradition of the Druids. For this reason they measure all periods of time not by the number of days but of nights ...

cf.

309. Cicero (mid-1st C. BC), *De divinatione*, I, 90

Not even among barbarians is the practice of divination neglected, since there are Druids in Gaul, one of whom I knew myself, your guest and eulogist Diviciacus the Aeduan. He claimed to have that knowledge of nature which Greeks call 'physiologia', and he used to foretell the future partly by means of augury and partly by conjecture.

In later writers, the twin themes of druidic philosophy and human sacrifice continued to fascinate. Again the context is Gaul:

310. Strabo (1st C. BC–1st C. AD), IV, 4, 4–5

Among all the Gauls in general there are three groups of men who are held in special honour: the Bards, the Vates, and the Druids. The Bards are singers and poets, the Vates perform ritual ceremonies and study natural philosophy, while the Druids engage in moral as well as natural philosophy. They are considered to be the most just of men and for this reason they are entrusted with deciding both private and public disputes, so that in earlier times they acted as arbitrators in war and made those on the point of going into battle stop, while cases of murder especially were handed over to them for decision. Whenever there is a large number of such murders, they consider there is also a large crop in store for them from the land. The Druids and others as well say that the soul, like the universe, is immortal, though at some time or other both fire and water will overwhelm them.

In addition to a general openness and high spirits the Gauls are characterised to a large extent by lack of sense, boastfulness, and love of adornment. For they not only wear golden ornaments – torques around their necks and bracelets around their arms and wrists – but those in high positions also wear clothes that have been dyed and shot through with gold. As a result of such volatility of character they appear insufferable when victorious and panic-stricken in defeat. In addition to their witlessness there is also the barbaric and outlandish practice which, to a very large extent, is common to all the northern tribes: that is the fastening of enemy heads to the necks of their horses when they leave the battle, and once they have taken them home nailing the spectacle to their doorposts. Poseidonius⁷ at all events says he personally saw this sight in many places and was at first disgusted by it, but later he got used to it and as a result did not give it a second thought. The heads of famous adversaries they used to embalm in

cedar-oil and exhibit to their guests; nor did they consider it right to return them for a ransom equal to their weight in gold. However, the Romans put an end to their practice of these customs as well as those concerned with sacrifices and divination that are contrary to our usages. For instance, they would strike a man dedicated for this purpose in the back with a knife and read the future from his death-throes. They would make no sacrifices without the Druids. There are also reports of other kinds of human sacrifice: for example, they used to shoot people to death with arrows, or impale them in their temples, or build an enormous figure out of wood and straw, throw into it cattle, all kinds of wild animals and human beings, and set it all on fire as an offering.

311. Diodorus Siculus (late 1st C. BC), V, 31, 2–5

The Gauls also have composers of songs whom they call Bards. These sing to the accompaniment of instruments like lyres either in praise of people or to deride them. There are also philosophers and theologians called Druids to whom they accord great honour. In addition they make use of soothsayers whom they deem worthy of great respect. These foretell the future by the observation of birds or through the sacrifice of animals, and they hold the masses in subjection to them. Furthermore, when they are involved in consideration of very important affairs, they have a strange and incredible custom: they strike a man dedicated as a victim with a knife in the region over the diaphragm, and when he collapses after the blow, they read the future by his fall, by the convulsions in his limbs, and additionally by the spurting of his blood. It is an ancient and longstanding method of divination in which they have full confidence. It is also their custom never to make a sacrifice without a ‘philosopher’; for they say that thank-offerings should be given to the gods by means of those who are experts in the nature of the divine, and, as it were, in communion with it. They also believe it is through these people that blessings should be sought. Nor is it only in time of peace that these people, together with the singers of songs, are given total obedience, but even in time of war, and by friend and foe alike. Frequently when armies confront one another in line of battle with swords drawn and spears thrust forward, these men intervene and cause them to stop, just as though they were holding some wild animal spellbound with their chanting.

312. Lucan (mid-1st C. AD), *Pharsalia*, I, 450–8

And you Dryadae (Druids) set aside your arms and sought again your barbaric rites and the sinister practice of your religion. To you alone is granted knowledge of the gods and the powers of heaven, or you alone are ignorant of them. The depths of groves in far-off forests are your abode, your teaching that the shades of the dead seek not the silent home of Erebus and the pallid realms of Pluto deep below: instead the same soul controls a body in another world, and if what you sing of is true, death is but the mid-point of a long existence.

**313. Pomponius Mela (1st C. AD), *De chorographia*,
III, 2, 18–19**

The tribes (of Gaul) are arrogant, superstitious and even at times inhuman, so much so that they believe a human victim is the most effective and the one most acceptable to the gods. Vestiges of their savage ways still remain, even if the practices themselves have been abolished; for though they refrain from outright murder, they nevertheless draw blood when they bring the faithful to the altars. However, they have their own brand of eloquence and in the Druids teachers of wisdom. These latter claim to know the size and shape of the world, the motion of the stars and the heavens, and the will of the gods. They teach many things to the most noble members of their race in secret locations, caves or hidden glades, and for a period of up to twenty years. One of the things they teach has become common knowledge among the masses, doubtless to make them braver in war, namely that the soul is eternal and that there is an afterlife among the shades. For this reason they cremate and bury with the dead those things that are appropriate to the living. At one time they even put off the transaction of business affairs and the recovery of debts until the next world, and there were some who willingly flung themselves onto the pyres of their kinsfolk as if to live on with them.

314. Valerius Maximus (early 1st C. AD), II, 6, 10

Leaving the town of Massilia (Marseilles) one encounters that ancient usage of the Gauls. It is said that they are in the habit of lending money to be repaid in the next world. The reason for this is they are convinced that the souls of men are immortal. I should call them stupid were it not for the fact that these trouser-wearing folk have exactly the same belief as that held by the Greek Pythagoras.

315. Diodorus Siculus (late 1st C. BC), V, 28, 6

The Pythagorean doctrine prevails among them (the Gauls), namely that the souls of men are immortal and that after a period of years they live again, since the soul enters another body.

316. Diogenes Laertius (3rd C. AD), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Prologue 1

Some say that the study of philosophy had its origins among barbarians. For the Persians had their Magi, the Babylonians or Assyrians the Chaldeans, the Indians their Gymnosophists, and the Celts and Gauls those called Druids or Semnotheoi. This is what Aristotle says in his work *Magicus* and Sotion in the 23rd book of his *Succession*.

317. Diogenes Laertius (3rd C. AD), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 6

Those who claim that philosophy arose from barbarians explain the systems that operate among each people. They say the Gymnosophists and Druids expounded their philosophy in riddles, bidding people to reverence the gods, do no evil, and practise valour.

318. Ammianus Marcellinus (late 4th C. AD), XV, 9, 4 and 8

- 4 The Drysidæ (Druids) record that part of the population (of Gaul) was in fact indigenous, but that others also were immigrants from islands far away and from regions across the Rhine, people who had been driven from their homes by repeated warfare and by inroads of the raging sea.
- 8 Throughout these regions the inhabitants gradually became civilised, and the study of praiseworthy skills flourished, a study introduced by the Bards, Euhages (Strabo's Vates) and the Drysidæ (Druids). The Bards celebrated the brave deeds of famous men in epic verse to the accompaniment of the sweet strains of the lyre. The Euhages investigated sublime topics, and attempted to lay bare the fundamental laws of nature. The Drysidæ were men of greater intellect, bound together into close communities as laid down by Pythagorean teaching. They were inspired by investigations into questions of a secret and lofty nature and, scorning things human, declared the soul to be immortal.

**319. Hippolytus (Pseudo-Origen) (3rd C. AD),
Philosophumena or Omnium haeresium refutatio
(*Refutation of All Heresies*), I, 25**

Among the Celts the Druids delved deeply into the Pythagorean philosophy, inspired to this pursuit by Zamolxis, a Thracian slave of Pythagoras. Following Pythagoras' death he went there and initiated this philosophy among them. The Celts consider them as prophets and able to read the future because they predict certain events as a result of computations and calculations using Pythagorean techniques. I shall not pass over in silence the methods of this same technique since some people have even presumed to introduce heresies from these people. The Druids also make use of magic.

For details of Druidic 'magic' we must rely on Pliny the Elder writing in the mid-first century AD:

320. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XVI, 249–51

- 249 While on this topic we must not omit the respect paid (to mistletoe) by the Gauls. The Druids – this is what they call their magicians – hold nothing more sacred than mistletoe and the tree on which it is growing, so long as this is oak. They even choose groves of oak simply for that fact alone, and perform no rites without its foliage. As a result it would seem that they are even called Druids from the Greek word for oak (*drus*). In particular they consider that anything growing on oaks has been sent by heaven and is a sign that the tree has been chosen by the god himself.
- 250 Mistletoe growing on an oak, however, is a rare find, and when it is found it is gathered with great reverence, above all on the 6th day of the moon (it is the moon that marks out for them the beginning of months and years and cycles of thirty years) because this day is already exercising great influence even though the moon is not half-way through its course. They call it⁸ in their language ‘all-healing’. Having prepared a sacrifice and banquet beneath the tree with all due ceremony, they bring up two bulls whose horns have been bound for the first time on that occasion.
- 251 The priest, dressed in a white robe, climbs the tree, reaps the mistletoe with a golden sickle, and it is gathered up in a white blanket. They then sacrifice the victims praying that the god makes this gift of theirs propitious for those to whom he has given it. They believe that when taken in liquid form mistletoe imparts fertility to any sterile animal and is an antidote for all poisons. Such is the reverence felt by very many tribes for such worthless matters.

321. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXIX, 52–4

- 52 There is moreover a type of egg held in great esteem by the Gauls but disregarded by the Greeks. Snakes entwined in large numbers make these objects with saliva from their mouths and a secretion from their bodies, employing an ingenious embrace. It is called *anguinum*, snake-egg, (alt. reading, wind-egg). The Druids say that it is thrown into the air by their hissing and should be caught in a blanket before it touches the earth. The catcher should flee away on horseback since the snakes will pursue him until they are prevented from doing so by a river blocking their way. The means of testing such an egg is if it floats against a current of water even when it is set in gold ...
- 53 I have indeed seen one of these, the size of a smallish round apple, its shell remarkable for the many gristly cavities like those on the tentacles of an octopus.
- 54 The Druids praise it greatly as producing success in law-suits and access to kings ...

322. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXIV, 103–4

- 103 Similar to this plant called Sabina is one called Selago. It is gathered without the use of any iron implement, but using the right hand protruding from the left armhole of the tunic as if the person involved were committing an act of theft. This person should be clad in white, his bare feet washed clean, and an offering of bread and wine made before gathering. It should be carried in a fresh white cloth. The Druids of Gaul teach that its possession wards off all harm and that the smoke of it is good for all eye troubles.
- 104 The same people mention a plant called Samolus which grows in damp areas. This should be gathered with the left hand by those fasting and be used against diseases of pigs and cattle. The person gathering it should not look at it (alt. look behind him) nor put it down anywhere except in the drinking trough where it is crushed for the animals to drink.

For Rome, however, the apparent ‘quaintness’ of druidic use of mistletoe and the like could not efface the unacceptable fact of human sacrifice. The reaction was first to restrict and then, as already stated by Strabo, IV, 4, 5 and Pomponius Mela, III, 2, 18 (§310 and 313) to abolish. cf.

323. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXX, 13

Magic undoubtedly had a hold on Gaul, even down to living memory; for it was in the reign of Tiberius Caesar that their Druids and that type of soothsayer and healer were abolished. But why mention this about a practice that has crossed Ocean and penetrated to the empty vastnesses of nature? Britain today is mesmerised by it and practises it with so much ceremony that one might think it was she who gave it to the Persians: so unanimous is the world in its acceptance of it, even though its practitioners are quite different from one another, or even ignorant of one another’s existence. Nor can one adequately reckon the debt owed to Rome in having put an end to those evil rites in which the greatest act of piety was to murder a man, and to eat his flesh most conducive to good health.

324. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Claudius*, 25, 5

Claudius totally abolished the dreadful and savage religion of the Druids in Gaul. Under the Emperor Augustus it had merely been forbidden to Roman citizens.

That the Druids themselves continued to exist, however, is suggested by Tacitus’ reference to their activities in AD 69:

325. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Histories*, IV, 54 (after the death of Vitellius)

But nothing inspired the Gauls to believe the end of the empire was at hand so much as the fire on the Capitol. They remembered that Rome had once been captured by the Gauls, but since the abode of Jupiter (the Capitol) had remained untouched, the Roman Empire had survived. Now the Druids with their worthless religion prophesied that heaven had provided a sign of its displeasure in this fatal fire, and it portended control of human affairs would pass to the tribes beyond the Alps.

Despite references to Druidism in Britain by Caesar, *Gallic War*, VI, 13 (§308), and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXX, 13 (§323), the first record of contact between Roman and Druid in Britain occurs in Tacitus' description of Paulinus' attack on Anglesey (*Annals*, XIV, 30, §73), and it is on this that claims for a druidic role in British resistance to Rome largely depend. Of the actual gods of Britain few real details survive beyond the name, location and sometimes the sphere of influence. In many cases it is even uncertain whether the god was native to Britain or an import from other Celtic parts of the empire after the conquest:⁹

326. From Carrawburgh (*RIB*, I, 1534)

To the goddess Coventina, Titus D ... Cosconianus, Prefect of the 1st Batavian Cohort, willingly and deservedly (dedicated this).

327. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 143)

To the goddess Sulis, for the welfare and safety of Marcus Aufidius Maximus, Centurion of the VI Legion Victrix. Aufidius Eutuches, his freedman, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

328. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 144)

To the goddess Sulis, for the welfare and safety of Aufidius Maximus, Centurion of the VI Legion Victrix, Marcus Aufidius Lemnus, his freedman, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

329. From Risingham (*RIB*, I, 1225)

To the god Mogons Cad ... and to the divine power of our Lord Augustus, Marcus G ... Secundinus, seconded for special duty by the Governor (*beneficiarius consularis*), on his first tour of duty at Habitancum, set this up for himself and his own.

330. From Vindolanda (*RIB*, I, 1695)

To the goddess Sattada, the assembly of the Textoverdi willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.

331. From Vindolanda (R. Birley, pl. 27)

To the gods, the Veteres, Longinus set this up.

332. From Hadrian's wall (*RIB*, I, 2063)

To the god Maponus and the divine power of the Emperor, Durio and Ramio and Trupo and Lurio, Germans, willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

333. From Hardriding nr. Chesterholm (*RIB*, I, 1683)

To the god Cocidius, Decimus Caerellius Victor, Prefect of the 2nd Cohort of Nervii, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

334. From Cirencester (*RIB*, I, 105)

To the Suleviae,¹⁰ Sulinus, son of Brucetus, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

cf.

335. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 151)

To the Suleviae, Sulinus the sculptor, son of Brucetus, willingly and deservedly made this offering.

336. From Colchester (*RIB*, I, 192)

To the Mother goddesses, the Suleviae, Similis, son of Attus, a tribesman of the Cantii, willingly fulfilled his vow.

That the Mother goddesses also answered a religious need among Roman citizens is shown by a number of dedications to them:

337. From Doncaster (*RIB*, I, 618)

To the Mother goddesses, Marcus Nantonius Orbitalus willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

cf.

338. From Newcastle (*RIB*, I, 1318)

To the Mother goddesses of his homeland across the sea, Aurelius Juvenalis (set up) this offering.

339. From York (*RIB*, I, 653)

To the Mother goddesses of Africa, Italy and Gaul, Marcus Minucius Audens, soldier of the VI Legion Victrix, pilot of the VI Legion, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

340. From Winchester (*RIB*, I, 88)

To the Mother goddesses of Italy, Germany, Gaul and Britain, Antonius Lucretianus, seconded for special duty by the Governor (*beneficiarius consularis*) restored (this).

341. From Brougham (*RIB*, I, 773)

To the god Balatucairus, Baculo willingly fulfilled his vow for himself and his family.
cf.

342. From Old Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 887)

To the holy god Belatucadrus, Aurelius Tasulus, veteran, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

343. From Carvoran (*RIB*, I, 1777)

To the goddess Epona P ... So ... (set this up).

344. From Benwell (*RIB*, I, 1327)

To the god Antenociticus¹¹ and the divine power of the Emperors, Aelius Vibius, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.
cf.

345. From Benwell (*RIB*, I, 1329)

To the god Anociticus, Tineius Longus (set this up) having been adorned with the broad stripe (of a senator) and designated Quaestor while serving as Prefect of cavalry by the decrees of our Best and Greatest Emperors, under Ulpius Marcellus, Consular Governor.

Interpretatio romana

Just as Caesar (in *Galic War*, VI, 17, §308) attempted to make the gods of the Gauls more comprehensible to his audience by identifying them with Roman divinities, so in Britain the practice of equating Roman and native or imported provincial gods continues, an additional element in the general process of Romanisation:

346. From Lydney Park (*RIB*, I, 305)

To the god Mars Nodons, Flavius Blandinus, Drill-instructor (*armatura*), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

347. From Lancaster (*RIB*, I, 602)

To the holy god Mars Cocidius, Vibenius Lucius, seconded for special duty by the Governor (*beneficiarius consularis*), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.
cf.

348. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1578)

To the god Silvanus Cocidius, Quintus Florius Maternus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Tungrians, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

349. From Bowes (*RIB*, I, 732)

To Vinotonus Silvanus, Julius Secundus, Centurion of the 1st Cohort of Thracians, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

350. From Caerwent (*RIB*, I, 310)

To the god Mars Ocelus, Aelius Augustinus, Deputy-centurion (*optio*), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.
cf.

351. From Caerwent (*RIB*, I, 309)

To the god Mars Lenus¹² or Ocelus Vellaunus, and the divine power of the Emperor, Marcus Nonius Romanus gave this gift from his own resources for his freedom from liability of the college, on August 23rd in the consulship of Glabrio and Homulus (AD 152).

352. From Old Penrith (*RIB*, I, 918)

To Mars Belatucadrus and the divine power of the Emperors, Julius Augustalis, steward (*actor*) of Julius Lupus, the Prefect, (set this up).

353. From Colchester (*RIB*, I, 191)

To the god Mars Medocius of the Campeses and the victory of our emperor Alexander¹³ Pius Felix, Lossio Veda, grandson (or nephew) of the Caledonian, Vepogenus, set this up as a gift from his own resources.

354. From Colchester (*RIB*, I, 193)

To the divine power of the Emperors and Mercury Andescocivovcus, Imilico, the freedman of Aesurilinus, gave this marble altar from his own resources.

355. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 146)

To the goddess Sulis Minerva and the divine power of the Emperors, Gaius Curiatius Saturninus, Centurion of the II Legion Augusta, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow for himself and his family.

356. From Corbridge (*RIB*, I, 1120)

To Apollo Maponus, Quintus Terentius Firmus, son of Quintus, of the Oufentine voting-tribe, from Saena, Camp-Prefect of the VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis, gave and dedicated (this).

**357. Bronze dish from South Shields
(*RIB* II, 2, 2415.55)**

To Apollo Anextiomarus, Marcus A ... Sab(inus) (dedicated this).

358. From West Coker (*RIB*, I, 187)

To the god Mars Rgisamus,¹⁴ Iventius Sabinus gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

359. From Martlesham (*RIB*, I, 213)

To the god Mars Corotiacus, Simplicia willingly and deservedly set up this offering for herself.

360. From Barkway (*RIB*, I, 219)

To Mars Toutatis,¹⁵ Tiberius Claudius Primus, freedman of Attius, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

361. From Barkway (*RIB*, I, 218)

To the god Mars Alator, Dum ... Censorinus, son of Gemellus, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

362. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1593)

To the god Mars Thincsus and the Two Alaisiagae, Beda and Fimmilena, and the divine power of the Emperor, German tribesmen from Tuihantis¹⁶ willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

363. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1576)

To the goddesses the Alaisiagae, Baudihillia and Friagabis, and to the divine power of the Emperor, the unit (*numerus*) of Hnaudifridus willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.

Here too might be included the Roman habit of personifying districts as divine entities:

364. From York (*RIB*, I, 643)

To holy Britannia, Publius Nikomedes, freedman of our Emperors (set this up).

365. From South Shields (*RIB*, I, 1053)

Sacred to the goddess Brigantia. Congenniccus willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

366. From Castlehill (*RIB*, I, 2195)

To the goddesses of the parade ground (Campestres) and Britannia, Quintus Pisentius Justus, Prefect of the 4th Cohort of Gauls, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

367. From near Brampton (*RIB*, I, 2066)

The vow to the goddess-nymph Brigantia which he made for the welfare and safety of Our Lord the unconquered Emperor Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus (Caracalla) and his whole Divine House, Marcus Cocceius Nigrinus, Procurator of our Emperor and most devoted to his divine power and majesty, has gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled.

Curses

Most dedications, be they addressed to Roman or native divinities, were motivated by feelings of gratitude and the hope of continued favour. That this was not always the case is indicated by the survival of curses, usually inscribed on lead and buried:

368. From Lydney Park (*RIB*, I, 306)

To the god Nodens. Silvanus has lost a ring. He has dedicated half of it to Nodens. Among those with the name Senicianus, grant no health until he brings it to the temple of Nodens.

The ring found?¹⁷

369. From Silchester, inscription on a gold ring (*RIB* II, 3, 2422.14)

Senicianus, live in God.

370. From London (*RIB*, I, 7)

I curse Tretia Maria and her life and mind and memory and liver and lungs mixed together, and her words, thoughts and memory. May she be unable to speak what is secret nor be able [...] nor [...]

371. From London (*RIB*, I, 6)

Titus Egnatius Tyrannus is cursed and Publius Cicereius Felix is cursed.

372. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 323)

Lady Nemesis, I give you a cloak and boots. May he who wore them not redeem them except with his life and blood.

373. From Clothall, Hertfordshire (*RIB*, I, 221)

Tacita, here cursed, is marked as old like gore.

374. From Bath (Tomlin [3], pp. 198f.)

I have given to the goddess Sulis the thief who stole my hooded cloak, be he slave or free, man or woman. Let him not redeem this gift except with his blood.

375. From Bath (Tomlin [3], pp. 232f.)

Whether pagan or Christian,¹⁸ whoever it is, whether man or woman, boy or girl, slave or free has stolen from me, Annianus, (son) of Matutina, 6 argentei from my purse, you, lady goddess, exact (them) from him. If through some deceit he has given me (undecipherable) and do not thus give to him but (undecipherable) his blood who has invoked this on me ...

376. From Bath (Tomlin [3], pp. 114f.)

Docimedis has lost two gloves. (He asks) that (the person) who stole them lose his mind and his eyes in the temple where (she) appoints.

377. From Bath (Tomlin [3], pp. 122f.)

Docilianus, son of Brucerus, to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse whoever stole my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, slave or free, that the goddess Sulis inflict death on him, and not let him sleep or have children now or in the future until he brings my cloak to the temple of her divinity.

378. From Bath (Tomlin [3], pp. 150f.)

Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity and majesty my bathing costume and cloak. Do not allow the one who did me wrong sleep or health, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, unless he shows himself and brings the items to your temple [...] his children or his [...] who [...] to him also [...] sleep or [...] and the rest, unless they bring those items to your temple.

379. From Bath (Tomlin [5], p. 169)

Basilia gives to the temple of Mars her silver ring. If anyone was involved, whether slave or free, or knows anything about it, may he be cursed in his blood, his eyes and all his limbs, or even have all his innards eaten away, he who stole it or was involved.

380. From Ratcliffe on Soar, Notts. (*JRS* 53 [1963], pp. 122–4)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, is granted that he hound through mind, through memory, through innards, through intestines, through heart, through marrow, through veins, through [...], whoever it was, whether man or woman who stole the denarii (?) of Canius Dignus, that in his own person he may shortly settle his debt. The god is granted a tenth of the money, when he has repaid it (?).

**381. From Ratcliffe on Soar, Notts. (*Britannia* 24
[1993], pp. 310–14)**

In the name of Camulorix and Titocuna I have dedicated in the temple of the god the mule/millstone (?) they lost. Whoever stole that mule/millstone, whatever his name, let him pour out his blood to the day he dies. May whoever stole the items involved in the theft die, and whoever stole the (unintelligible), may he too die. Whoever stole it and the (unintelligible) from the house or the pair of bags (?), whoever stole it, may he die by the god.

**382. From Uley, Gloucestershire (*Britannia* 19
[1988], pp. 485–7)**

Biccus gives to Mercury whatever he has lost (on condition that the thief), whether man or male (sic) may not urinate or defaecate or speak or sleep or wake or (have) well-being or health unless he brings it to the temple of Mercury, nor gain consciousness of (it) unless at my intercession.

**383. From Uley, Gloucestershire (*Britannia* 20
[1989], pp. 329–30)**

To the god Mercury. Docilinus (unintelligible) Varianus and Peregrina and Sabinianus who have brought evil harm to my breast and (unintelligible) I ask you to drive them to the greatest death and grant them neither health nor sleep unless they redeem from you what they have done to me.

**384. From Uley, Gloucestershire (*Britannia* 23
[1992], pp. 310–11)**

Honoratus to the holy god Mercury. I complain to your divine power that I have lost two wheels and four cows and many small items from my house. I would ask the spirit of your divine power not to allow the person who did me wrong health, nor to lie down or sit or drink or eat, be it man or woman, boy or girl, slave or free, unless he brings my belongings to me and is reconciled to me. By my repeated prayers I ask your divine power that my petition make me immediately vindicated by your majesty.

**385. From Uley, Gloucestershire (*Britannia* 27
[1996], pp. 439–41)**

The sheet (of lead) which is given to Mercury, so that he may exact vengeance for the gloves that have been lost. May he take the blood and health from whoever took them, so that he accomplish as quickly as possible for the man who took the gloves what we ask the god Mercury.

386. From Uley, Gloucestershire (*Britannia* 26 [1995], pp. 373–6)

To the holy [god] Mercury. [I complain] to you about those who think ill of me and do me wrong over [...], whether slave or free, whether m[ale] or [fem]ale, that you do not permit them to stand or sit or eat or drink nor buy off [this wrath] except with their blood [...].

387. From Hamble Estuary (*Britannia* 28 [1997], pp. 455–7)

Lord Neptune, I give you the man who stole the solidus and six silver coins of Muconius. Thus, I give the names who took them away, whether male or female, whether boy or girl. So, I give you, oh Niskus and Neptune, the life, health, blood of him who was privy to that theft. The mind which stole it and was privy to it, may you take it away. The thief who stole it, may you consume his blood and take it away, Lord Neptune.

That such inscriptions could be used for good as well as ill is suggested by:

388. From West Deeping (*Britannia* 27 [1996], pp. 443–5)

Womb, I tell you, stay in your place [...] has given to you. I adjure you by Iao and by Sabao and by Adonai not to hold on to the side but stay in your place, and do not harm Cleuomedes, daughter of [...]

Roman imports

Paralleling the interpretation of native divinities by identifying them with their classical counterparts was an influx of foreign gods from the rest of the empire. Many were major or minor members of the Greco-Roman pantheon, dedications to whom might represent instances of official policy or private piety; others came from the east and brought with them more exotic modes of worship.

I. The Graeco-Roman gods

389. From Newstead (*RIB*, I, 2120)

To the god Apollo, Lucius Maximius Gaetulicus, legionary Centurion (set this up).
cf.

390. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1665)

To the god Apollo, Melonius Senilis, soldier on double pay (*duplicarius*) from Germania Superior, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled the vow he had undertaken.

391. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1579)

To the gods and goddesses according to the interpretation of Apollo at Claros (in Ionia, Asia Minor) the 1st cohort of Tungrians (set this up).

392. From Newstead (*RIB*, I, 2122)

To Diana the Queen, on account of a favourable outcome, Gaius Arrius Domitianus, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

393. From Castlecary (*RIB*, I, 2149)

To the god Neptune, the 1st Loyal Cohort of Vardulli, Roman Citizens, part-mounted, 1,000-strong, under the command of the Prefect Trebius Verus (set this up).

394. From Castlecary (*RIB*, I, 2148)

To the god Mercury, soldiers of the VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis, citizens of Italy and Noricum, (set up) this shrine and statuette, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilling their vow.

395. From Caernarvon (*RIB*, I, 429)

To the goddess Minerva, Aurelius Sabinianus, Record-keeper (*actarius*), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

396. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1580)

To Hercules, the 1st Cohort of Tungrians, 1,000-strong, under the command of the Prefect Publius Aelius Modestus (set this up).

397. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 812)

To the Genius (Spirit) of the place, Fortune the Homebringer, Eternal Rome, and Good Fate, Gaius Cornelius Peregrinus, Tribune of the cohort, Decurion of his home town of Saldæ in the province of Mauretania Caesariensis, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

cf.

398. From Auchendavy (*RIB*, I, 2175)

To the Genius (Spirit) of the land of Britain, Marcus Cocceius Firmus, Centurion of the II Legion Augusta (set this up).

399. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1591)

To the god Mars, Quintus Florius Maternus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Tungrians, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

400. From the Foss Dyke (*RIB*, I, 274)

To the god Mars and the divine power of the Emperors, the Colasuni, Bruccius and Caratius, gave this at their own expense at a cost of 100 sesterces. Celatus, the coppersmith, made it and gave a pound of copper at the cost of 3 denarii.

401. From Birrens (*RIB*, I, 2100)

To Mars and the Victory of the Emperor, the Raetian tribesmen serving in the 2nd Cohort of Tungrians commanded by the Prefect Silvius Auspex willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

402. From Stony Stratford (*RIB*, I, 215)

To the god Jupiter and Vulcan, I, Vassinus, promised six denarii should they bring me, their votary, back safe, and have paid the money in fulfilment of my vow.

403. From Newstead (*RIB*, I, 2124)

To the god Silvanus, Gaius Arrius Domitianus, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow for himself and his family.

cf.

404. From York (*RIB*, I, 659 restored)

[Sacred to the holy] g[od] Silva[nus]. Lucius Celerinius Vitalis, Adjutant (*cornicularius*) of the IX Legion Hispana, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow. Let this gift form part. I must beware of touching.

405. From Bollihope Common (*RIB*, I, 1041)

Sacred to Unconquered Silvanus. Gaius Tetius Veturius Micianus, Prefect of the Sebosian squadron, willingly set this up in fulfilment of his vow on account of his capture of an outstandingly fine boar which many before him had been unable to bag.

406. Spoons from Thetford (*RIB* II, 2, 2420.11, 2420.12, 2420.14, 2420.15, 2420.17, 2420.20)

(Property) of the god Faunus Andicrose
 (Property) of the god Faunus Ausecus
 (Property) of the god Faunus Blotugus
 (Property) of the god Faunus Cranus
 (Property) of the god Faunus Medigenus
 (Property) of the god Faunus Narius

407. From Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 247)

To the goddesses, the Fates, and the divine power of the Emperors, Gaius Antistius Frontinus, Guild-treasurer (*curator*) for the third time, dedicated this altar at his own expense.

408. From Old Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 890)

To the goddess Bellona, Rufinus, Prefect of the Augustan cavalry squadron, and Latinianus, his son, (set this up).

409. From Maryport (*RIB*, I, 808)

To Asclepius, Aulus Egnatius Pastor set this up.

410. From South Shields (*RIB*, I, 1052)

To the god Aesculapius, Publius Viboleius Secundus gave this altar as a gift.

411. From Chester (*JRS* 59 [1969], p. 235)

The doctor Antiochus (honours the) saviours of men pre-eminent among the immortals: Asklepios of the healing hand, Hygeia (and) Panakeia.

412. From York (*RIB*, I, 644)

To the goddess Fortune, Sosia Juncina (wife of) Quintus Antonius Isauricus, (legionary) Legate of Augustus, (set this up).

413. From Chester (*JRS* 57 [1967], p. 203)

To the goddess Nemesis, Sextius Marcianus (dedicated this) as the result of a vision.

Exhibiting perhaps more than a little imagination is the following:

414. From Catterick (*RIB*, I, 725)

To the god who invented roads and pathways, Titus Irdas, auxiliary infantryman seconded to the Governor's guard (*singularis consularis*), gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow. Quintus Varius Vitalis, seconded for special duty by the Governor (*beneficiarius consularis*), restored this sacred altar in the consulship of Apronianus and Bradua.

cf.

415. From Corbridge (*RIB*, I, 1142)

Quintus Calpurnius Concessinius, Prefect of cavalry, following the slaughter of a band of Corionototae, fulfilled his vow to the god of most potent power.

II. German gods¹⁹

416. From Birrens (*RIB*, I, 2108)

To the goddess Viradecthis, (the tribesmen) of the Condrustian district serving in the 2nd Cohort of Tungrians under the Prefect Silvius Auspex (set this up).

417. From Birrens (*RIB*, I, 2107)

To the goddess Ricagambeda, (the tribesmen) of the district of Vella serving in the 2nd Cohort of Tungrians willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow.

418. From Lanchester (*RIB*, I, 1074)

To the goddess Garmangabis and the divine power of our Emperor Gordian for the welfare of the detachment of Suebians of Longovicium, Gordian's own, (the soldiers) deservedly fulfilled their vow.

See also §202, 362, 363, 494–6, 499.

III. The Eastern cults²⁰

Mobility of population among the mercantile classes and as a factor in military life made it inevitable that Britain would be brought into contact with the gods of the east. That some became more than the personal imports of individuals, however, is doubtless due to their offering the convert what was generally absent from the Graeco-Roman pantheon: emotional commitment and a sense of belonging.

From Syria came a number of divinities: Jupiter Dolichenus, a Romanised soldier-god who had originally belonged to the Hittites and was particularly popular among officers:

419. From Great Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1725)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, of Doliche, Lucius Maximius Gaetulicus, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

cf.

420. From Corbridge (*RIB*, I, 1131)

To Eternal Jupiter of Doliche and Caelestis Brigantia and Salus, Gaius Julius Apolinaris, Centurion of the VI Legion, (set this up) at the command of the god.

421. From Piercebridge (*RIB*, I, 1022)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, of Dolyche, Julius Valentinus, Centurion from Germania Superior, gladly, willingly and deservedly set this up at the command of the god for himself and his family in the second consulship of Praesens and Extricatus (AD 217).

Similarly Astarte and Melkaart:

422. From Corbridge (*RIB*, I, 1124)

You see me, an altar of Astarte. Pulcher set me up.

423. From Corbridge (*RIB*, I, 1129)

To Heracles of Tyre (Melkaart), the priestess Diodora (set this up).

In the reign of Septimius Severus (AD 193–211) the Libyan origins of the Emperor, and his Syrian-born wife, Julia Domna, were to become the subject of religious allegory:

424. From Carvoran (*RIB*, I, 1791)

The Virgin in her heavenly place rides upon the lion, bearer of corn, inventor of law, founder of cities, by whose gift it is our good fortune to know the gods; therefore she is Mother of the gods,²¹ Peace, Virtue, Ceres, the Syrian goddess,

weighing life and laws in her balance. Syria has sent the constellation seen in the heavens to Libya to be worshipped. From this we have all learned. Thus, led by thy godhead, Marcus Caecilius Donatianus has understood, serving as Tribune in the post of Prefect by the Emperor's gift.

cf.

425. From Carvoran (*RIB*, I, 1792 restored)

To the Syrian goddess, under Calpurnius Agricola, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus, Lic[*in*]ius [C]lem[ens, Prefect] of the 1st [Co]hort of Ha[mians], (set this up).

From Egypt came Isis and Osiris, the latter in his Graeco-Roman guise of Serapis:

426. From London, a graffito on a jug (*RIB* II, 8, 2503.127)

In London, at the shrine of Isis.

427. From London (*Britannia* 7 [1976], pp. 378f.)

For the honour of the Divine House, His Excellency Marcus Martianus Pulcher, Pro-Praetorian Legate of the Augusti, ordered the restoration of the temple of Isis [...] which had collapsed through age.

428. From York (*RIB*, I, 658)

To the holy god Serapis, this temple was built from ground-level by Claudius Hieronymianus, Legate of the VI Legion Victrix.

Of all the pagan eastern cults, however, the most significant was that of Mithras,²² originally an element in Persian Zoroastrianism, which offered its devotees an escape from darkness into light, but demanded in return life-long commitment and discipline, hence its appeal to the military. As a god of light Mithras was frequently equated with the sun:

429. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1599)

To the Unconquered Sun Mytras (Mithras), Lord of Ages, Litorius Pacatianus, seconded for special duty by the Governor (*beneficiarius consularis*), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow for himself and his family.

cf.

430. From Housesteads (*RIB*, I, 1600)

To the Unconquered Sun Mitras, Lord of Ages, Publicius Proculus, Centurion, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow for himself and Proculus, his son, in the consulship of our Lords Gallus and Volusianus.

In other cases, the equation with the sun is omitted:

431. From Carrawburgh (*RIB*, I, 1545)

Sacred to the Unconquered god Mithras, Aulus Cluentius Habitus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Batavians, of the Ultinian voting-tribe, from Colonia Septimia Aurelia Larinum, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

cf.

432. From Carrawburgh (*RIB*, I, 1546)

To the Unconquered god Mitras, Marcus Simplicius Simplex, Prefect, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

433. From Carrawburgh (*RIB*, I, 1544)

To the Unconquered Mithras, Lucius Antonius Proculus, Prefect of the 1st Cohort of Batavians, Antoninus' own, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

434. From Rudchester (*RIB*, I, 1395)

To the Unconquered god Mytras, Publius Aelius Titullus, Prefect, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

Alternatively, we find dedications to the sun god in contexts that are clearly Mithraic, or associations of Mithras with other gods:

435. From Rudchester (*RIB*, I, 1396)

To the Unconquered Sun, Tiberius Claudius Decimus Cornelius Antonius, Prefect, restored this temple.

436. From Rudchester (*RIB*, I, 1397 restored)

To the Sun-god Apollo, Unconquered [Mithras], Aponius Rogatianus [...]

437. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1272)

Sacred to the Unconquered god and the Sun-companion for the welfare and safety of the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus. Lucius Caecilius Optatus, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of Vardulli together with his fellow-devotees (raised this), built from ground level, as an offering to the god.

As the central element in the religion, and the one most frequently represented, was Mithras' sacrifice of the cosmic bull, from whose blood stemmed all animal and vegetable life. Since, however, Mithraism was essentially a dualistic cult, there was an evil counterpart in Arimanes:

438. From York (*RIB*, I, 641 restored)

Volusenus Iren[aeus gave] this as a gift to Arimanes, [willingly and deservedly fulfilling] his vow.

Inevitably the salvationist aspects of Mithraism brought it into competition with the other major eastern saviour-cult, Christianity.²³ The earliest evidence for the religion in Britain comes in a fleeting reference from Tertullian writing c. AD 200:

439. Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, 7, 4

... places in Britain inaccessible to the Romans, but which have submitted to Christ.

Not until after Constantine's edict of toleration in AD 313, however, does evidence of an organised church begin to emerge:

440. *Acts of the Council of Arles* AD 314

Eborius, bishop of the city of York in the province of Britain, Restitutus, bishop of the city of London in the above-mentioned province, Adelphius, bishop of the city Colonia Londenensium,²⁴ also Sacerdus, presbyter, and Arminius, deacon.

441. Athanasius (4th C. AD), *Letter to the Emperor Jovian*, 2

This article of faith was agreed upon by those Fathers (of the Church) meeting in Nicaea (AD 325), and all the Churches everywhere voted for it: those in Spain and Britain and Gaul ... and those Churches in the East with the exception of the few that hold Arian opinions.

442. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos (Defence Against the Arians)*, 1

(The matter was decided) for the third time at the great synod assembled at Sardica (AD 343) by the orders of those Emperors most beloved of God, Constantius and Constans, at which our adversaries were overthrown. To the judgements on our side were given the votes of more than 300 bishops from the provinces of Egypt, Libya ... and Britain.

443. Sulpicius Severus (5th C. AD), *Historia Sacra*, II, 41, AD 360

The Council was therefore commanded to assemble at Arminium (Rimini), a city in Italy, and the Prefect Taurus was instructed not to dismiss those assembled before they agreed on a single doctrine. He was in fact promised the consulship if he brought the matter to a successful conclusion. And so state officials were sent through Illyria, Italy, Africa, Spain, and Gaul, and somewhat over 400 western bishops gathered at Arminium by invitation or compulsion. The emperor had given instructions that they all be given food and board, but this seemed improper to our representatives from Aquitania, and to those from Gaul and Britain. They refused the treasury grants and preferred to live at their own expense. Only three from Britain made use of public funds through lack of private means, and they refused a collection offered by the others, thinking it more holy to be a burden to the treasury than to individuals.

Within Britain itself evidence for Christianity at the time comes largely through the use of the Chi-Rho monogram, ☩, as a decorative device and the occurrence of Christian formulas:

444. Pewter ingots from the Thames (*RIB*, II, 1, 2406.1–10)

Either: (Product of) Syagrius, Hope in God, ☩
Or: Syagrius A ☩ W

445. Silver bowls from Chesterton (*RIB*, II, 2, 2414.1–2)

1 A ☩ W Innocentia and Viventia gave this.
2 A ☩ W I prostrate myself and honour your holy sanctuary, O Lord.
Publianus

446. Bone plaque from York (*RIB*, II, 3, 2441.11)

Hail, sister, live in God.

cf. From Richborough (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.70)

Justin, live in God.

Here too may be included the Cirencester word-square (itself a palindrome) which was once regarded as containing a secret reference to Christianity, though such an origin has now been seriously questioned.²⁵

447. Cirencester word-square (*RIB*, II, 4, 2447.20)

ROTAS = Arepo, the Sower, holds the wheels with care (or as his work).

OPERA

TENET

AREPO

SATOR

=

	P	
	A	
A	T	O
	E	
	R	
P	A	T
T	E	N
E	R	O
	S	
A	T	O
	E	
	R	

cf. Manchester (*RIB*, II, 6, 2494.98)

ROTAS

OPERA

TENE[T

Recent finds of letters, however, begin to reveal more personal concerns and the problems caused by heresy:

448. Letter from Bath (*ZPE*, 100 [1994], pp. 93–108)

Obverse: Vinisius to Nigra: [The grace] of our Lord Jesus Christ to thine. (Your) husband's faults Vinisia has related to Vilius' Similis. [...] with all your strength [...]. Unless in just conflicts [...].

Reverse: The enemy of Christ has sent Biliconus from Viriconium (Wroxeter) in order that you may take him in the sheepfold, although a dog of Arius. Pray to Christ for light. XPS Apulicus carries these sheets.

That Britain, like the rest of the empire, suffered from the periodic outbursts of persecution against the Christians is shown by the martyrdom of St Alban, variously dated to the reigns of Septimius Severus,²⁶ Decius or Valerian,²⁷ or Diocletian.²⁸ The earliest reference occurs c. 470:

449. Constantius, *De vita Germani (The Life of Germanus)*, 16

With the damnable heresy curbed and its authors refuted and with the minds of all restored to calm by the purity of the faith, the priests sought out the blessed martyr Alban, intending to give thanks to God through the saint ...

cf.

450. Gildas (6th C. AD), *De excidio Britanniae (On the Destruction of Britain)*, 10–11

10 By God's own free gift in the above-mentioned time of persecution, as we conjecture, (i.e. the reign of Diocletian), and lest Britain be totally plunged into the thick gloom of black night, He kindled for us the brilliant lamps of the holy martyrs ... I mean St Alban of Verulamium, together with Aaron and Julius, citizens of the City of the Legion (Caerleon) ...

11 The first of these, through love, hid a confessor who was being pursued by his persecutors and on the very point of being arrested, thus imitating Christ who laid down his life for his sheep. First he hid him in his house and then, exchanging clothes with him, willingly exposed himself to the danger of persecution in the garments of the above-mentioned brother ...

451. Bede (8th C. AD), *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (History of the English Church)*, I, 7

This Alban, who was as yet a pagan, received into his house as a guest a certain priest fleeing from persecution at the time when the commands of the heathen emperors were raging against the Christians. Seeing that this man applied himself night and day to constant prayer and vigils, and influenced by God's grace, he began to imitate his example of faith and piety. Gradually he was taught by the man's salutary encouragement, and relinquishing the darkness of idolatry became a whole-hearted Christian. While the aforementioned priest was being entertained in his house for some days, news reached the ears of the impious prince that one of Christ's confessors, for whom the role of martyr had not yet

been assigned, was lying low in the house of Alban. As a result he straight away ordered soldiers to make a careful search for him. When they came to the martyr's cottage, St Alban soon showed himself to the soldiers in place of his guest and mentor, dressed in the man's clothes, the hooded cloak that he wore, and was led off to the judge in bonds. It happened that at the time Alban was brought to him the judge was offering sacrifices to the pagan gods at the altars. When he saw Alban, he became enflamed with anger at the fact that Alban had ventured to offer himself of his own free will to the soldiers in place of the guest he had harboured, and thus to expose himself to danger. He ordered him to be dragged to the images of the gods before which he stood and said: 'Since you preferred to conceal that profane rebel rather than surrender him to the soldiers so that he might pay the penalty he deserves for his blasphemy and contempt of the gods, you will suffer the penalty for which he was due if you attempt to reject the rites of our religion.' But St Alban, who had voluntarily given himself up to the persecutors as a Christian, was not in the least afraid of the prince's threats. Rather, being girded with the armour of spiritual warfare, he openly declared he would not obey his commands. Then the judge said: 'Of what house and stock are you?' Alban replied: 'What business is it of yours of what lineage I am born? If on the other hand you desire to hear the truth of my religion, know that I am now a Christian and devote myself to Christian service.' The judge said: 'I seek your name, so tell me it without delay.' The other replied: 'The name given me by my parents is Alban, and I revere and ever worship the true living God who created all things.' Then, filled with anger, the judge said: 'If you wish to enjoy the blessings of a long life, do not refuse to offer sacrifice to the great gods.' Alban replied: 'These sacrifices which you offer to the pagan gods can neither help their recipients nor fulfil the wishes and desires of those praying. Rather, whoever offers sacrifice to these images shall receive as his reward the eternal punishment of Hell.' When the judge heard this, he was roused to great fury and ordered the holy confessor of God to be beaten by the torturers in the belief that since words had failed, he could weaken the constancy of his heart with the lash. Though afflicted by most cruel torture, Alban bore it with patience and even with joy for God's sake, and when the judge realised that he could not be overcome by torture or enticed from the rites of the Christian religion, he ordered him to be beheaded.

As he was being led to his death, Alban came to a river which separated the town from the place of his execution by its very swift course. There he saw a large crowd of people, both men and women of all ages and social class, who were clearly drawn by divine impulse to follow the blessed confessor and martyr. They filled the bridge over the river to such an extent that they could scarcely all get over before nightfall. Indeed since almost all had gone forth, the judge was left in the city without any attendants. So, St Alban, in whose mind was a burning desire to come quickly to his martyrdom, approached the torrent, and raising his eyes to heaven, he saw the bed of the river instantly dry up and the water withdraw and make a path for his steps. When the

executioner himself saw this along with others, he hastened to meet Alban when he came to the place appointed for his execution, doubtless urged on in this by divine impulse. Casting away the sword he held ready drawn, he threw himself at his feet and earnestly desired that he himself be thought worthy of being executed either with the martyr he was ordered to slay or in his place ... (Alban climbs a hill and causes a stream to appear) ... So it was that the brave martyr, there decapitated, received the crown of life which God promised to those who love him, but the man who set his unholy hands upon that pious neck was not allowed to rejoice over the death; for his eyes fell to the ground along with the head of the blessed martyr. Beheaded too at that time was the soldier who previously had been impelled by the will of Heaven to refuse to strike the holy confessor of God ... Then the judge, daunted by such great and unprecedented heavenly miracles, soon ordered a halt to the persecution. He was beginning in fact to pay honour to the slaughter of saints, through which he previously believed he could force them to give up their allegiance to the Christian faith. The blessed Alban suffered on the 22nd of June near the city of Verulamium ... At that time there also suffered Aaron and Julius, citizens of Caerleon, and many others both men and women in various places ...

At a later date, the closing years of Roman influence saw both a renewal of sanctity in Patrick:

452. Patrick, *Confessio*, 1

I, Patrick, a sinner, the lowest and the least of all the faithful, the most contemptible of many, had as my father Calpornius, a deacon and son of the presbyter Potitus who lived in the village of Bannavem Taburniae. He had a small estate nearby and there I was taken prisoner. I was then about 16. I was ignorant of the true God, and was led off into captivity in Ireland along with so many thousands of people.

and in Pelagianism the rise of a heresy that was not perhaps without political overtones at a time when self-help might mean survival:²⁹

453. Prosper Tiro (5th C. AD), *Chronicon*, 1248–52

In the consulship of the illustrious Lucian ... At this time (AD 413) the Briton Pelagius put out the doctrine against the Grace³⁰ of Christ that bears his name, assisted by Coelestius and Julian, and drew many into his error, declaring that each man was directed to righteousness of his own choice and received as much grace as he deserved, since Adam's sin harmed him alone: it did not also bind

those that came after him. As a result it was possible for those who so wished to be free from all sin; all children were born as innocent as the first man before the fall, nor should they be baptised in order to lay aside (original) sin but to be honoured with the sacrament of adoption (into the Church).

454. Prosper Tiro, *Chronicon*, 1299–1301

In the consulship of Florentius and Dionysius (AD 429) ... the Pelagian Agricola, son of the Pelagian bishop Severianus, corrupted the Church in Britain by the introduction of his doctrine.

Unable to refute the arguments of the heresy, the Catholic church in Britain appealed to the bishops of Gaul:

455. Constantius (5th C. AD), *De vita Germani (The Life of Germanus)*, 12–27

12 At the same time (AD 429) an embassy sent from Britain made it known to the bishops in Gaul that the Pelagian heresy had taken hold of the people far and wide in their land, and that they should send help to the Catholic faith as soon as possible. For this reason a large assembly was summoned, and by a unanimous decision they solicited with their prayers those two brilliant lights of religion, Germanus and Lupus, both apostolic priests ... (They cross to Britain despite adverse weather conditions and bolster up the Catholic faith) ...

14 ... The authors of the evil doctrine maintained a low profile and like malign spirits groaned at the loss of people who escaped their clutches. Finally, after much thought, they deigned to enter the lists. Forth they came, gleaming with their riches, brilliantly clothed, and surrounded by much flattery. They preferred to submit to the hazard of public debate rather than to incur the ignominy of silence among the people they had subverted, lest they seem to have damned themselves by keeping quiet. A truly vast multitude of people was invited, along with their wives and children, and assembled there. The people were present as observers and judges while the opposing sides presented vastly differing appearances: on one side divine authority, on the other human presumption; on one side faith, on the other heresy; on one side Pelagius as teacher, on the other Christ. The blessed priests first gave their opponents the opportunity to state their case; this took up much time to no purpose and filled the ears with nought but empty words. Then the venerable bishops poured forth torrents of their eloquence along with thunderings from the apostles and evangelists. Their own speech was interspersed with scriptural passages and they followed their own weighty declarations with written testimony. Vanity stood convicted; heresy refuted ...

- (Germanus cures the blind daughter of a man said to exercise the 'power of a Tribune'. They then go to the shrine of St Alban).
- 16 ... The priests sought out the blessed martyr Alban, intending to give thanks to God through the saint ... (Germanus is hurt in a fall, and while he is resting in a house the buildings in the vicinity catch fire. However, while the flames consume all around, the building containing Germanus is untouched. Following this, Germanus cures many sick people and is eventually himself cured by miraculous means) ...
- 17 In the meantime, the Picts and Saxons joined forces and made war on the Britons, whom the same need had brought together into the camp, and since in their fear the Britons judged themselves not quite equal to the enemy, they sought the help of the holy bishops. They for their part hastened their promised coming and instilled such a feeling of security and confidence that one would have thought a great army had arrived. And so it was that with these apostolic leaders there was Christ militant in the camp. The forty days of Lent were also at hand, which the presence of the priests made all the more holy in as much as the people, taught by daily preaching, eagerly flocked to receive the grace of baptism. For most of the army sought the water of salvation ... With the festival of Easter over, the greater part of the army, fresh from their baptism, prepared to take up their arms and get ready for war. Germanus declared himself their leader in battle, picked out those lightly armed, scouted the surrounding countryside and noticed a valley, surrounded by lofty mountains, in that quarter where he expected the arrival of the enemy. Here he assembled his new army with himself as its leader.
- 18 Soon there came upon them the fierce host of the enemy, which those lying in ambush saw approaching. Then suddenly Germanus, the standard-bearer, exhorted and commanded all his men to repeat his words together in a loud voice, and with the enemy in their negligence confident that their arrival was unexpected, the priests three times cried out 'Alleluia'. All replied in unison, and the close confines of the mountains re-echoed the cry they raised. The enemy forces were struck with terror and fear that both the rocks around them and the very vault of heaven threatened to overwhelm them. They scarce believed the swiftness of their feet sufficient (to escape) the terror hurled upon them. They fled in all directions, cast aside their weapons, were glad to have saved their unprotected bodies from the danger ... (Germanus and Lupus return to the continent) ...
- 25 In the mean time (*c.* AD 446) it was reported from Britain that once again the perversity of Pelagianism was spreading through the agency of a few people. Once more the entreaties of all the priests are conveyed to that most blessed man, that he defend the cause of God which earlier he had championed. Speedily he agreed to their request since he delighted in exertion and gladly devoted himself to Christ ... Together with Severus, a bishop of singular holiness, he put to sea led only by the inspiration of Christ. The

elements conspire to produce a smooth crossing ... (Their arrival is followed by a miracle of healing which confirms the Britons' belief in Catholic doctrine) ...

- 27 ... He then turned to preach to the people about repentance for their transgressions, and by universal assent the authors of that enormity, condemned to be banished from the island, were brought to the priests for conveyance into the depths of the continent, so that the land might have the pleasure of being rid of them, and they the profit of their repentance.³¹

GOVERNMENT, COMMERCE AND SOCIETY

Government

Following the conquest of south-east Britain, brought about by the concentrated efforts of the legions and their associated auxiliary troops, came the need to extend, garrison and administer what had been gained. Overall control of the new province lay with the governor, but at a local level government was delegated to a variety of institutions as soon as was practicable.¹ As an early and temporary expedient, friendly tribes were allowed internal autonomy under a client king, thus freeing Roman troops for deployment along the frontier or in areas that had offered resistance. The most famous was Cogidubnus,² who represents the system at its most successful:

456. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 14

Certain tribal areas were given to King Cogidubnus – he in fact remained totally loyal down to our times – in accordance with the Roman People's old and long-standing policy of making even kings their agents in enslaving peoples.

Less harmonious on the other hand were Rome's relations with the kingdom of the Iceni, where on two occasions riding roughshod over agreements and native sensibilities caused major problems for the Romans (Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 31, §70, *Annals*, XIV, 31, §73). Another instance of the system's failure is probably Cartimandua of the Brigantes (Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 40, §71, *Histories* III, 45, §95).

With time, tribal areas were converted into *civitates peregrinae*, non-citizen cantons:

457. From Wroxeter (*RIB*, I, 288 restored)

For the Emperor Ca[esar] Trajan H[a]drian Augustus, son of the deified Trajan, conqueror of Parthia, grandson of the dei[fied N]erva, Pontif[ex] Maximus (High Priest) in the fourteenth year of his holding Tribunician Power (AD 130), [thrice Consul, Father of his Country], the *Civitas* of the Cornovii (set this up).

Each had its own local capital, usually with the urban status of vicus³ or village, the smallest unit of local administration, as is the case with Petuaria, ostensibly the capital of the Parisi of East Yorkshire:

458. *RIB*, I, 707 (restored)

For the honour of the Divine House of the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius H[adri]-anus Antoninus A[ugustus Pius], Father of his Country, [thrice] Consul, and the Divine Power of the E[mperors], Marcus Ulpius Januarius, Aedile⁴ of the *Vicus* of Petu[aria] (Brough-on-Humber), [gave] this stage at his own expense.

In other cases, the term *vicus* was used simply to designate a small town that had grown up around a military site:

459. From Chesterholm (*RIB*, I, 1700)

For the Divine House and the Power of the Emperors the villagers (*vicani*) of Vindolanda (set up) this sacred offering to Vulcan under the direction of [...] willingly and deservedly fulfilling their vow.

460. From Old Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 899)

To Jupiter, Greatest and Best, and to Vulcan, for the welfare of Our Lord Marcus Antonius Gordianus Pius Felix Augustus, the leaders of the villagers (*vikani*) dedicated this from money contributed by the villagers.

So far as the scant remaining evidence indicates, administration in the *civitates* tended to mirror that found in the more important urban settlements, the colonies, and in the municipium of Verulamium (St Albans). Here power was vested in the *Ordo*, a local senate, composed of decurions:⁵

461. From York (*RIB*, I, 674)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Flavius Bellator, *Decurion* of the colony of York. He lived for 29 years [...] months.

462. From Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 250a)

To the spirits of the departed. Volusia Faustina, a citizen of Lincoln, lived twenty-six years, one month, twenty-six days. Aurelius Senecio, *Decurion*, set this up to his well-deserving wife.⁶

cf. the inscription from Caerwent, capital of the Silures:

463. *RIB*, I, 311 (restored)

To [Tiberius Claudius] Paulinus, Legate of the II Legion Augusta, Proconsul of the province of (Gallia) Narbonensis, the Emperor's Pro-Praetorian Legate of the province of (Gallia) Lugdunensis, by decree of the *Ordo* the *civitas* of the Silures (set this up).

464. From Old Penrith (*RIB*, I, 933)

To the spirits of the departed (and) Flavius Martius, Senator⁷ in the *civitas* of the Carvetii, of Quaestorian rank, who lived for 45 years. Martiola, his daughter and heiress, had this set up.

Acting as executive officers of the *Ordo* were two *Duoviri luridicundo*:

465. *RIB*, II, 5, 2487.1

Commonwealth of the people of Gloucester: The *Duoviri* Perpetuus and Aprilis.

***RIB* II, 5, 2487.2**

Commonwealth of the people of Gloucester: The *Duoviri* Optatus and Saturninus.

***RIB*, II, 5, 2487.3**

Commonwealth of the people of Gloucester: The *Duovir* Publius Aelius Finitus.

***RIB*, II, 5, 2488.1**

Commonwealth of the people of Gloucester: The (*Duoviri*) quinquennales⁸ Iul(ius) Flor(us) and Cor(nelius) Sim[...]

While administration within the *civitates* remained strictly limited to local affairs, expressions of wider non-citizen concern could be voiced, if only in very restricted areas, through the delegates sent to the Provincial Council:

466. From London (*RIB*, I, 5 restored)

To the divine power of C[ae]sar Augustus], the prov[in]ce of] Brita[in]⁹ (set this up).

467. From London (*RIB*, I, 21)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Claudia Martina aged 19, Anencletus, provincial slave, (set this up) for his most dutiful wife. Here she lies.

The economy of Britain

Trade between Britain and the continent was already an established fact long before the first contacts with Rome (Strabo IV, 4, 1, §21), but pre-eminent among the exports mentioned by writers in the early period (cf. Strabo IV, 5, 2, §14) was Cornish tin:¹⁰

468. Diodorus Siculus (late 1st C. BC), V, 22

However, I shall give a detailed account of the customs in Britain and the other particular usages when I come to Caesar's expedition to Britain. For the time being, I shall deal with the tin produced there. Those inhabitants of Britain around the promontory called Belerium (Land's End) are particularly hospitable and civilised in their way of life as a result of their dealings with foreign merchants. They it is who produce the tin, working the ground that bears it in an ingenious manner. This is stony and contains seams of earth in which they mine the ore and refine it by smelting. They hammer it into the shape of knuckle-bones and transport it to an island that lies off Britain called Ictis (St Michael's Mount?); for at low tide the space between is left high and dry and they transport the tin here in large quantities by means of wagons. A strange thing occurs around the nearby islands between Britain and Europe, for at high tide the causeways between them and the mainland are covered and they seem to be islands, but at low tide the sea recedes and leaves a large area high and dry so that they look like peninsulas. There (Ictis) merchants buy the tin from the natives and transport it to Galatia (Gaul). Finally, making their way on foot through Galatia for around 30 days, they bring their merchandise on horseback to the mouth of the river Rhone.

The prospect of economic gain indeed was doubtless a factor in the invasions of both Caesar and Claudius. In Caesar's case Britain must have held out the prospect of an escape from the chronic debts his political ambitions created, though in the event Britain proved a disappointment, as Cicero ironically mentioned (§30). cf.

469. Plutarch (1st–2nd C. AD), *Caesar*, 23.3

In many battles Caesar defeated the enemy rather than benefited his own men, since there was nothing worth taking from the natives, whose living standard was low.

By Claudius' day, on the other hand, the economic potential was better known, and within six years of invasion exploitation of mineral resources was well under way, especially of lead, the ore of which often contained an element of silver:

470. Lead ingot¹¹ from the Mendips, Somerset (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.1)

Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the ninth year of his holding Tribunician Power (AD 49), sixteen times saluted Imperator, from Britain.

In frontier areas, military involvement is well attested:

471. Lead ingot from Blagdon, Somerset (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.2)

British (lead) II Augusta. V(eranius) and P(ompeius) (consuls AD 49).
cf.

472. Lead ingot found at St Valéry sur Somme, France (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.24)

(Property of) Nero Augustus. British (lead). The II Legion (made this).

With time, however, civilian prospectors begin to make their appearance:

473. Lead ingot from Bossington, near Stockbridge, Hants. (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.3), AD 60

(Property of) Nero Augustus, Consul from January 1st for the fourth time. British (lead).

From July 1st Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), Consul.

From the silver works. (Product of) Gaius Nipius Ascanius XXX.

Ascanius' name also appears on an ingot from Carmel in Flintshire, suggesting wide-ranging commercial interests:

474. *RIB*, II, 1, 2404.38

(Product) of Gaius Nipius Ascanius.¹²

By the reign of Vespasian (AD 69–79), on the other hand, the Flintshire field was clearly under imperial control:

475. From Chester (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.31), AD 74

The Emperor Vespasian Augustus, Consul for the fifth time, and Titus, Imperator, Consul for the third time.

Deceangl(ian lead).

cf.

476. Lead ingot from Hints Common, Staffs. (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.34) AD 76

The Emperor Vespasian, Consul for the seventh time, and Titus, Imperator, Consul for the fifth time.

Deceang(lian lead).

Evidence from Gloucestershire, though, shows continuing civilian activity and an early reference to a mining company:

477. Lead ingot from Syde, Glos. (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.13), AD 79

(Property of) the Emperor Vespasian Augustus, Consul for the ninth time, Brit(ish lead) from the silver works.

(Product of) the company at Nove[...]

As new areas were opened up for exploitation, production clearly began to over-reach itself, and in the 70s we hear of the need to limit production:

478. Pliny the Elder (1st C. AD), *Natural History*, XXXIV, 164

Lead is used for pipes and sheets. In Spain and throughout the whole of Gaul it is extracted with considerable effort; in Britain, however, it is so abundant within the upper layers of the earth that there is a law forbidding its production beyond a certain amount.

Following Agricola's annexation of Brigantia Roman exploitation once more increased, spurred on by the building programmes that followed conquest:

479. Lead ingot from Heyshaw Moor nr. Pateley Bridge, Yorks. (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.61–2), AD 81

The Emperor Caesar Domitian Augustus, Consul for the seventh time.

[Bri]g(antian lead).

The Derbyshire field, in particular, seems to have been very active, with private developers prominent:

480. From Matlock Bank (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.40)

(Product) of Lucius Aruconius Verecundus. From the mine at Lutudarum.

481. From Yeaveley (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.59–60)

(Product) of the company at Lutudarum. Brit(ish lead). From the silver works.

482. From Tansley Moor (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.51)

(Product) of Publius Rubrius Abascantus. From the mine at Lutudarum.

483. From Matlock Moor (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.41)

Ti(berius) Cl(audius) Tr(iferna). (From the mine at) Lutudarum.

Br(ish lead). From the silver works.

Restoration of Triferna's name suggests identifying him with a contractor also operating in the Mendips:

484. *RIB*, II, 1, 2404.7

(Property of) the Emperor Vespasian Augustus.

Brit(ish lead). From [the silver works V]EB

LXV Ti(berius) Cl(audius) Trif(erna).

485. *RIB*, II, 1, 2404.9¹³

(Property of) the Emperor Vespasian Augustus. LRA[D]

Brit(ish lead). From the silver works VEB

Ti(berius) Cl(audius) Trif(erna)

LXIX

[Ti(berius) Cl(audius)] Trifer(na)

The products of Lutudarum are also found over a wide area:

486. From Pulborough, Sussex (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.42)

(Product of) Ti(berius) Cl(audius) Tr(iferna). (From the mine at) Lutudarum.

Br(ish lead). From the silver works.

**487. From Hexgrove Park, Notts., S. Cave, E. Yorks.,
Brough-on-Humber (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.46, 47, 48–50)**

(Product) of G(aius) Jul(ius) Protus. Brit(ish lead) from Lutudarum. From the silver works.

**488. From Belby, nr. Howden, Broomfleet, Brough-on-Humber, Ellerker, E. Yorks., Caves Inn, Warks.
(*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.53, 54, 55, 57, 58)**

(Product of) the Company at Lutudarum. Br(itish lead). From the silver works.

In contrast, ingots cast with datable inscriptions show lead being produced under imperial supervision from the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–38) to Septimius Severus (AD 196–211):

489. From Wirksworth, Derbyshire (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.39)

(Property) of the Emperor Caesar Hadrian Augustus. From the mine at Lutudarum.

490. From Bristol (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.17)

(Property) of the Emperor Caesar A[nto]ninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country.

491. From Sassenay, France (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.72a)

[Property of the Emperor Casesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax] Augustus, Conqueror of Parthia and Adiabene.

DL P L(egion) VI¹⁴ CVC [...] VICVC

Associated finds with illegible ingots suggest indeed that production continued into the reign of Constantius II (AD 337–61) and beyond (from Towcester *RIB*, II, 1, 2404.67). While the evidence of ingots shows that companies were operating in areas of metal extraction, it is also clear that the establishment of Roman-style guilds to supervise production was taking place from an early date:

492. From Chichester (*RIB*, I, 91 restored)

To Neptune and Minerva this temple (is dedicated) for the safety of the Divine House on the authority of Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus, [Gr]eat Ki[ng] in

Britain,¹⁵ by the guild (*collegium*) of smiths and its members from their own resources, [Clem]ens son of Pudentinus presenting the site.
cf.

493. From Silchester (*RIB*, I, 70 restored)

... without contr]ibutions from their own resources gave this [gif]t, [entrust]ed to him, by the gui[ld] (*collegium*) of [pere]gr[i]ni [dwelling] at Calleva (Silchester).

International trade too between Britain and the Continent is shown by dedications made by merchants (as Marcus Aurelius Lunaris and Marcus Verecundius Diogenes §306–7 probably were). cf.

494. From E. Scheldt (*L'Année Epigraphique*, 1975, p. 168 no. 651)

To the goddess Nehalennia, Placidus, son of Viducius,¹⁶ a citizen of Velocasium and trader with Britain, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

495. From Germania Inferior (*L'Année Epigraphique* 1973 p. 105 no. 370)

To the goddess Nehalennia, Marcus Secundinus Silvanus, trader in chalk with Britain, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.

496. From Ganuenta, E. Scheldt (Bogaers [2] p. 19)

To the goddess Nehalennia, Gaius Aurelius Verus, trader with Britain, willingly and deservedly (dedicated this altar) on account of his vow.

497. From Cologne (*CIL*, XIII, 8164a)

To Apollo, Gaius Aurelius Verus of the Claudian voting tribe, trader with Britain, *moritex*(?), gave this as a gift, the site being presented by a decree of the decurions.

498. From London (*Britannia* 34 [2003], pp. 364–5)

To the powers of the Emperors and the god Mars Camulus, Tiberinius Celerianus, a citizen of the Bellovaci, *moritix*, of Londoners the first [...]

499. From Ganuenta, E. Scheldt (Bogaers [2] p. 17)

To the goddess Nehalennia, Publius Arisenius Marius, freedman of Publius Arisenius V[...]hius, trader with Britain, willingly and deservedly [fulfilled his vow] for her good protection of his wares.

Nor was lead and its associated silver the only mineral that was mined. Exploitation of tin continued apace in order to make pewter by mixing it with lead (§444), and bronze by mixing it with copper:

500. Copper ingot from Aberffraw, Anglesey (RIB, II, 1, 2403.3)¹⁷

(Product of) the partners Nat ... Sol ..., resident in Rome.

Coal too, though of limited use in industry, was evidently deemed worthy of mention:

501. Solinus (3rd C. AD), *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (The Collection of Curiosities), 22, 10

In Britain are many great rivers, and warm springs adorned with sumptuous splendour for the use of mortals. Minerva is patron goddess of these and in her temple the eternal flames never whiten into ash, but rather, when the fire dies away, it turns into rocky round masses.

The other major resource Rome was not slow to exploit was Britain's agricultural wealth, which figures in descriptions of the island even before the Claudian conquest (§8, 11, 12, 14). The very fact of occupation brought an immediate spur to production in order to feed the garrison and other official personnel through the *annona*, the grain tax, and with taxation came openings for corruption:

502. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Agricola*, 19

Agricola made the collection of the corn tax (*annona*) and tribute less onerous by spreading the burden fairly, and by cutting out schemes aimed at private gain, which proved a greater source of resentment than the tribute itself. For instance, the natives were forced to go through the farce of sitting outside locked granaries and actually buy grain, thereby discharging their obligations by the payment of money. Alternatively, out-of-the-way routes and distant districts were stipulated, so that tribal areas made their deliveries to remote and inaccessible stations even

though there were winter quarters close at hand.¹⁸ As a result, an obligation that should have been easy for all was turned into a source of profit for a few.

Britain's continuing importance as a producer of grain throughout its Roman occupation is well illustrated in fact by the loss felt at the usurpation by Carausius (§212) and the efforts of Julian to ensure supplies for the Rhine garrison (§251–5). As well as grain, early writers on Britain also make reference to the island's abundance in livestock:

**503. Pomponius Mela (1st C. AD), *De chorographia*,
III, 6, 50**

(Britain is) huge and fertile with those things that benefit cattle rather than men.

From sheep came wool good enough to make its finished products worth particular mention on inscriptions:

504. From Thorigny, France (*CIL*, XIII, 3162)

I would like you to accept ... a British bed-spread.

and as part of Diocletian's edict on prices:

505. Diocletian, *Edictum Diocletiani*, XIX, 28, 29, 48

British coverlet, 1st form: 5,000 denarii

British coverlet, 2nd form: 4,000 denarii

British hooded cloak: 6,000 denarii

Other products recorded include dogs, already known in the period between Caesar and Claudius from Strabo (§14), cf.

506. Grattius (early 1st C. AD), *Cynegeticon*, 174–81

But what if you reach the straits of the Morini washed by a fluctuating sea, and choose to pass among the Britons? How great then is your trade, how far (your profit) beyond your outlay! If you haven't set your mind on looks and deceptive beauty – this is the one thing British pups lack – then, when hard work comes and bravery must be shown and impetuous Mars calls in dire crisis, you would not admire the famed Molossians as much.

507. Oppian (early 3rd C. AD), *Cynegetica*, I, 468–80

There is a strong breed of hunting dog, small in size but no less worthy of great praise. These the wild tribes of Britons with their tattooed backs rear and call by the name of Agassian. Their size is like that of worthless and greedy domestic table dogs: squat, emaciated, shaggy, dull of eye, but endowed with feet armed with powerful claws and a mouth sharp with close-set venomous tearing teeth. It is by virtue of its nose, however, that the Agassian is most exalted, and for tracking it is the best there is; for it is very adept at discovering the tracks of things that walk upon the ground, and skilled too at marking the airborne scent.

508. Nemesianus (3rd C. AD), *Cynegetica*, 225f.

Britain sends us swift hounds, adapted to hunting in our world.

509. Claudian, *On the Consulship of Stilicho* (delivered early 400), III, 301

British dogs that can break the necks of great bulls.

beer:

510. Dioscorides (1st C. AD), *De medica materia* (*On Medicine*) II, 88

And (there is the drink) called *curmi*, prepared from barley, which people often use as a drink instead of wine, but it causes headaches and bad humours and is harmful to the nerves. Such drinks are also prepared from wheat as in Spain and Britain in the west.

wine:

511. Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Probus*, 18, 8

He granted permission to all the Gauls, Spaniards and Britons to cultivate vineyards and make wine.

cherries:

512. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XV, 102

Before the victory of Lucius Lucullus in the Mithridatic War there were no cherry trees in Italy down to the year 680 (74 BC). It was he who first imported them from Pontus and in 120 years they have crossed the sea as far as Britain.

pearls:

513. Suetonius (2nd C. AD), *Julius*, 47

Caesar invaded Britain in the hope of finding pearls.

cf. Tacitus (1st–2nd C. AD), *Agricola* 12 (§15)

**514. Pliny the Elder (1st C. AD), *Natural History*, IX,
116**

It is clear that small pearls of a discoloured appearance are produced in Britain, since the deified Julius wanted it to be known that the breastplate he dedicated to Venus Genetrix in her temple was made of British pearls.

**515. Aelian (2nd–3rd C. AD), *On the Characteristics of
Animals*, XV, 8**

Pearls occur also in the western ocean where the island of Britain is, though they have a more golden appearance and a duller and darker sheen.

**516. Ammianus Marcellinus (late 4th C. AD), XXIII,
6, 88**

It is well known that this type of gem (pearls) occurs and is gathered even in the recesses of the British sea, though they are of lesser quality.

jet:

**517. Solinus (3rd C. AD), *Collectanea rerum
memorabilium*, 22, 19**

... there is there a very large supply of that excellent rock, jet. If you wish to know what it looks like: it has the appearance of a black jewel; if its nature you seek: it burns with water and is extinguished with oil; if its power: when warmed by rubbing, it holds onto things in contact with it, like amber.

Society

Without doubt the best documented evidence we have for the inhabitants of Roman Britain consists of the discharge certificates (diplomas) awarding citizenship to auxiliary troops on their retirement from service, inscriptions recording the careers of more highly placed officers and officials, and the correspondence and documents of individuals that have come to light in recent years, especially at Vindolanda on the Stanegate.

Diplomas

**518. From Malpas, Cheshire (*RIB*, II, 1, 2401.1),
AD 103**

[The Emperor Caesar] Nerva Trajan [Aug]us[tu]s, conqueror of Germany and Dacia, son of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the seventh year of his holding Tribunician Power, four times saluted Imperator, Father of his Country, five times Consul, to the cavalry and infantry who are serving in the four squadrons and eleven cohorts called: 1st Thracian, 1st Pannonian Tampiana, Sebosius' Gauls, Vettonian Spaniards, Roman Citizens; 1st Spanish, 1st Vangiones 1,000-strong, 1st Alpine, 1st Morini, 1st Cugerni, 1st Baetasii, 1st Tungrians 1,000-strong, 2nd Thracians, 3rd Bracari, 3rd Lingones, 4th Dalmatians, who are in Britain under Lucius Neratius Marcellus, and have served for twenty-five or more years each and whose names are appended, has granted citizenship for themselves, their children and posterity, together with the right of legal marriage with the wives they had when citizenship was granted, or, if they were unmarried, those they have subsequently married, so long as it is only one.

January 19th, in the second consulship of Manius Laberius Maximus and Quintus Glitius Atilius Agricola.

(Copy) for the Decurion (troop-leader) Reburus, son of Severus, from Spain, in the 1st Squadron of Pannonians Tampiana commanded by Gaius Valerius Celsus.

Copied from and compared with the bronze tablet affixed in Rome to the wall behind the temple of the deified Augustus near (the statue of) Minerva.

(Witnesses)

Quintus Pompeius Homerus

Titus Flavius Secundus

Gaius Vettienus Modestus

Gaius Papius Eusebes

Publius Caulus Vitalis

Publius Atinius Hedonicus

Tiberius Claudius Menander

519. From Wroxeter (*RIB*, II, 1, 2401.8), AD 135

[The Emperor Caesar] Trajan [Hadrian Augustus, son of the deified Trajan, conqueror of Parthia], grandson of the [deified] Nerva, [Pontifex Maximus] (High Priest) in the 19th year [of his holding Tribunician Power], thrice Consul, Father of his Country, [to the cavalry and infantry who have served in [...] squadrons and] thirty-one [cohorts] called: [...] Augustus' Gauls [...], the Petriana squadron 1,000-strong, 1st Asturians, [...] Tungrians, [...], 1st Vardulli 1,000-strong, 1st & 2nd [...] 1,000-strong, 1st Hamians, 1st & 2nd Dalmatians, [...], 1st Baetasii, 1st Batavians [...], 3rd, 4th & 6th Nervii, [...], 5th Gauls and 7th Thracians who [are in Britain under Mummius] Sisenna, [have served] for twenty-five [or more years] and have been honourably [discharged], and whose names are appended, has granted citizenship for themselves, their

children and posterity, together with the right of legal marriage with the wives they had when citizenship was granted, or, if they were unmarried, those they have subsequently married, so long as it is only one. April 14th in the consulship of Lucius Tullius Pontianus and Publius Calpurnius Atilianus.

(Copy) for [Ma]nsuetus, son of Lucius, of the Treveri, ex-infantryman of the 2nd cohort of Dalmatians commanded by Julius Maximus, from Rome.

Copied and compared with the bronze tablet affixed in Rome to the wall behind the temple of the deified Augustus near (the statue of) Minerva.

520. From Sydenham, Kent (*RIB*, II, 1, 2401.2)

The Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus, conqueror of Germany and Dacia, son of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) in the ninth year of his holding Tribunician Power, four times saluted Imperator, five times Consul, Father [of his Country], to the cavalry and infantry who are serving in two squadrons and eleven cohorts called: 1st Tungrians and the Classiana squadron, Roman Citizens; 1st Celteberians, 1st Spanish, 1st Lingones, 1st Loyal Vardulli, 1st Frisians, 1st Nervii, 2nd Vascones, Roman Citizens; 2nd [Lingo]nes, [2nd A]sturians, [2nd] Pannonians, [... Dal]matians [who are] in Britain [...] and who have [served for] twenty-five [or more years] and whose [names are appended, has granted citizenship] for themselves, their children [and posterity], together with the right of legal marriage [with the wives] they had [when the citizenship was granted, or, if] they were unmarried, [those they have subsequently married] so long as [it is only one ...]

The discovery of such diplomas in Britain shows that their recipients, though originally from elsewhere in the empire, chose to settle in Britain, the country they had served in. By the same process we find diplomas awarded to British auxiliaries who chose to settle in Continental provinces:

521. From Dacia (*Burn* 71), AD 106

The Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus, conqueror of Germany and Dacia, son of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the fourteenth year (AD 110: wrong) of his holding Tribunician Power, six times saluted Imperator, five times Consul, Father of his Country, has granted Roman citizenship before completion of their service to the infantry and cavalry serving in the 1st Cohort of Britons, 1,000-strong, Trajan's own, awarded the *torquis*, loyal and true, Roman Citizens, which is in Dacia under Decimus Terentius Scaurianus, and whose names are appended, for loyal and true service in the Dacian campaign.

August 11th at Darnithithis in the consulship of Lucius Minicius Natalis and Quintus Silvanus Granianus.

To Infantryman Marcus Ulpius Novantico, son of Adcobrovatus, from Leicester.

**522. From Mehadia, Dacia (*L'Année Epigraphique*
1980 p. 202, no. 760), AD 154**

[The Emperor Caesar] Titus Aelius [Hadrianus Ant]oninus Augustus Pius, son of the [deified Had]rian, [grandson] of the deified Trajan, [conqueror of Parthia], great-grandson of the [deified Ner]va, Pontifex [Maximus] (High Priest), [with Tribunician Power ...], twice saluted Imperator, four times Consul, Father of his Country, [...] September 27th in the consulship of Sextus Calpurnius Agricola and Tiberius Claudius Julianus [...] (has granted) to the Briton Iwonercus, son of Molax, infantryman of the 1st Ulpian Cohort of Britons 1,000-strong, under Lucius Nonius Bassus [...]

523. From Pannonia (*CIL*, XVI, 49), AD 105

[...]with the wives they then had when citizenship was granted, or, if they were unmarried, those they have subsequently married, so long as it is only one.

January 12th, in the second consulship of Tiberius Julius Candidus Marius Celsus and Gaius Antius Julius Quadratus.

To Infantryman Lucco, son of Trennus, of the Dobunni, in the 1st British Cohort 1,000-strong, Roman Citizens, under the command of Quintus Caecilius Redditus, and to Tutela, daughter of Breucus, his wife, Azalian,¹⁹

and to Similis his son,

and to Lucca his daughter,

and to Pacata his daughter.

In other cases it is clear that the individual involved, though discharged from service in Britain, chose to return home:

524. From A-Szöny, Hungary (*CIL*, XVI, 69), AD 122

The Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the deified Trajan, conqueror of Parthia, grandson of the deified Nerva, Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), in the sixth year of his holding Tribunician Power, thrice Consul, Proconsul, to the cavalry and infantry who have served in the thirteen cavalry squadrons and thirty-seven cohorts which are called: 1st Pannonian Sabiniana, 1st Pannonian Tampiana, 1st Spanish Asturians, 1st Tungrians, 2nd Asturians, Picentius' Gauls, Classicus' Gauls and Thracians, Roman Citizens; Petreius' Gauls 1,000-strong, Roman Citizens; Sebosius' Gauls, Vettonian Spaniards, Roman Citizens; Agrippa's Miniata (squadron), Augustus' Gauls, Augustus' Vocontii, Roman Citizens; 1st Nerva's Germans 1,000-strong, Roman Citizens; 1st Celtiberians, 1st Thracians, 1st Africans, Roman Citizens; 1st Lingones, 1st Loyal Vardulli 1,000-strong, Roman Citizens; 1st Frisians, 1st Vangiones 1,000-strong, 1st Hamian archers, 1st Dalmatians, 1st Aquitanians, 1st Ulpian Trajan's

Cugerni, Roman Citizens; 1st Morini, 1st Menapians, 1st Sunuci, 1st Baetasii, 1st Batavians, 1st Tungrians, 1st Spanish, 2nd Gauls, 2nd Vascones, Roman Citizens; 2nd Thracians, 2nd Lingones, 2nd Asturians, 2nd Dalmatians, 2nd Nervii, 3rd Nervii, 3rd Bracari, 3rd Lingones, 4th Gauls, (4th Lingones), 4th Breuci, 4th Dalmatians, 5th Raetians, 5th Gauls, 6th Nervii, and 7th Thracians who are in Britain under Aulus Platorius Nepos, and, having served for twenty-five years, have received honourable discharge from Pompeius Falco and whose names are appended, has granted citizenship for themselves, their children and posterity, the right of legal marriage with the wives they then had when citizenship was granted, or, if they were unmarried, those they have subsequently married, so long as it is only one.

July 17th, in the consulship of Tiberius Julius Capito and Lucius Vitrasius Flamininus.

(Copy) for Gemellus, son of Breucus, Pannonian formerly on pay-and-a-half (*sesquiplicarius*) in the 1st Pannonian Tampiana under the command of Fabius Sabinus.

Copied and compared with the bronze tablet affixed to the wall behind the temple of the deified Augustus near (the statue of) Minerva at Rome.

(Witnesses)

Tiberius Claudius Menander

Tiberius Julius Urbanus

Lucius Nonius Victor

Lucius Pullius Ant ...

Aulus Fulvius Justus

Lucius Pullius Daphnus

Quintus Lollius Festus

Career inscriptions

For many high-ranking Romans it is clear that Britain was but a stage in their careers:

525. From Nomentum, Italy (*CIL*, XIV, 3955)

Gnaeus Munatius Aurelius Bassus, son of Marcus, of the Palatine voting-tribe, Procurator of Augustus, Prefect of Engineers, Prefect of the 3rd Cohort of archers, Prefect again of the 2nd Cohort of Asturians, Census Officer for Roman Citizens at the colony of Victory at Colchester in Britain, Curator of the Nomentum road, Patron of this same town, Priest for life, Aedile with magisterial power, Dictator²⁰ four times.

526. From Camerini, Italy (*ILS*, 2735)

To Marcus Maenius Agrippa Lucius Tusidius Campester, son of Gaius, of the Cornelian voting-tribe, host of the deified Hadrian, father of the senator, Prefect of the 2nd Flavian Cohort of Britons part-mounted, chosen by the deified

Hadrian and sent on the expedition to Britain, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of Spaniards part-mounted, Prefect of the mailed squadron of Gauls and Pannonians, Augustus' Procurator of the British fleet, Procurator of Britain, Knight on the Establishment, Patron of this town, the villagers of Censorglacium having gained through the favour of his mediation and by the kindness of our Greatest and Best Emperor Antoninus Augustus Pius those privileges in which they are permanently confirmed (set this up) on ground given by decree of the Decurions.

527. From Lambaesis, Africa (*JRS* 2 [1912], p. 22)

To the spirits of the departed. Titus Flavius Virilis, Centurion of the II Legion Augusta, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, Centurion of the VI Legion Victrix, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, Centurion of the III Legion Augusta, Centurion of the III Legion Parthica, Severus' own, commanding the 2nd Century of Hastati of Cohort 9, lived seventy years, served forty-five. Lollia Bodicca, his wife, and Flavius Victor and Victorinus, his sons and heirs, had this made at a cost of 1,200 sesterces.

Correspondence

While diplomas and inscriptions present their information in the stylised language of official documents, the chance survival of actual handwritten material from individuals stationed at Vindolanda on the northern frontier presents us with the unique opportunity to glimpse day-to-day life at the fort in the period AD 90–120: its military strength, the supplies it needed, the concerns of its personnel and their families, the dealings of its soldiers, slaves and civilians. The writing tablets that have been recovered are not the wax-filled frames one might expect (though these do occur on the site) but thin leaves of wood (mostly birch, alder and oak) about the size of a postcard, written on with ink.²¹ Though their preservation is remarkable, due entirely to the airless conditions that quickly established themselves on the rubbish heaps that were their final resting place, the texts they carry are often either fragmentary or barely legible. Painstaking restoration, however, does allow a reconstruction of the information they hold:

528. An inventory of military personnel present in a milliary infantry cohort (Bowman and Thomas, 154), AD 92–7

May 18th. Complement of the 1st [Co]hort of Tungrians under the Prefect Julius Verecundus: 752, including six centurions.

Of these absentees:

Governor's guards: 46

At the office of Ferox at Coria:	337, including 2(?) centurions
At London:	1(?) centurion
[...]	6, including 1 centurion
[...]	9, including 1 centurion
[...]	11
[...]	1
	45
Total absentees:	456, including 5 centurions
Remainder present:	296, including 1 centurion
Of these:	
Sick:	15
Wounded:	6
With eye trouble:	[10]
Total:	31
Remainder, fit for duty:	[2]65, including [...]

529. Military reports²² (Bowman and Thomas, 164)

The northern Britons [...] There are great numbers of cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords, nor do the wretched Britons mount to hurl their javelins.

530. (Bowman and Thomas, 574), AD 97–103

April 15th. Report of the 9th Cohort of Batavians. Everyone who ought to be at his post is there, as is the baggage. The *optiones* and *curatores*²³ submitted the report. The *optio* Arcuittius from the century of Crescens delivered it.

531. Requests for furlough (Bowman and Thomas, 175)

I, Messicus, ask you my lord²⁴ that you consider [me a worthy person] to whom you may grant leave at Coria (Corbridge).

532. (Bowman and Thomas, 168)

[...] of the century of Felicio. [I ask you my lor]d Cerialis that you consider me a worthy person [to who]m you might grant [lea]ve.

Cerialis, commander of the fort at some time in the period AD 97–103 and to whom the soldier from the century of Felicio addressed his request, lies at the heart of a rich collection of documents on a wide range of subjects:

533. A request to Cerialis for advancement (Bowman and Thomas, 250)

[...] ius Karus to [hi]s Ceri[alis], g[reetings] [...] Brigionus has requested me, sir, to recommend him to you. I ask, therefore, sir, that you consent to support any request he has made to you. I ask that you see fit to recommend him to Annius Equester, Centurion in charge of the region, at Luguvalium [...] I shall be indebted [to you] [...] I hope that you are prospering and in good health. (2nd hand) Farewell brother.²⁵

To Cerialis, Prefect.

534. Cerialis seeks influential friends in order to advance his own prospects²⁶ (Bowman and Thomas, 225)

[...] to his Crispinus. Since Grattius Crispinus is returning [...] and [...] I have gladly taken this opportunity, sir,²⁷ of greeting you, you who are my lord and whom it is my special wish to be in good health and in possession of his every hope. For you have always deserved this of me right up to your present [...]. In reliance upon this [...] you first [...] the most noble [...] Marcellus, my Governor. Therefore [...] the opportunity now of [...] of your friends, through his presence, of whom I know you have very many, [thanks to] him. Fulfil whatever I expect of you, however you wish, and [...] so furnish me with friends that through your kindness I can enjoy a pleasant period of military service. I write this to you from Vindolanda [...] winter quarters.

535. Cerialis receives good-luck wishes from his friends (Bowman and Thomas, 248)

Niger and Brocchus to their Cerialis, greetings. It is our hope, brother, that what you are about to do will be successful. It will indeed be so since it is both in accord with our desire to make this prayer on your behalf, and you yourself are most worthy. You will meet our Governor quite soon for sure. (2nd hand) We hope, lord and brother, that you are well and prospering.

To [Fl]av[ius] Cerialis [...] of Cohort [...]

536. Letters forwarded to Cerialis (Bowman and Thomas, 263)

[...] to his Cerialis [...] and the letters which you had received from Equester, Centurion of the 3rd Cohort of Batavians [...]. February 28th (or April 30th)²⁸ [...] lady [...]

To Flavius Cerialis, Prefect of the 9th Cohort of Batavians from Vitalis, Decurion of the Augusta cavalry squadron.²⁹

537. Cerialis helps out with clothing (Bowman and Thomas, 255)

[Cl]odius Super to his Cerialis, greetings. I was glad that our friend Valentinus duly approved the clothing on his return from Gaul. I greet you through him and ask you to send the things I need for my boys (slaves?), i.e. six cloaks, [...] other cloaks, seven [...], five tu[nics]. You know that I am adept at getting hold of this since I am the commissariat officer and just about to acquire transport. (2nd hand) May you fare well, my dearest lord and brother, and [...]

To Flavius Cerialis, Prefect, from [C]l[o]dius Super, Centurion.

**538. Cerialis himself asks for hunting nets³⁰
(Bowman and Thomas, 233)**

(a) gruel (or lettuces)
pork-crackling
pig's trotters

(b) Flavius Cerialis to his Brocchus, greetings. If you love me, brother, I ask you to send me hunting nets(?).

**539. Hunting nets left behind
(Bowman and Thomas, 593)**

Nets which we have left behind:

A net for thrushes, a net for ducks, a drag-net for fishing

Three snares for swans in the possession of [...], seven snares in the possession of Veteranus.

The friendship between Cerialis and Brocchus extended to their wives also. Two letters of a social nature survive written by Brocchus' wife Claudia Severa to Cerialis' wife Sulpicia Lepidina:

540. (Bowman and Thomas, 291)

(1st hand) Claudia Severa to [her] Lepidina, [gr]e[eti]ngs. On the 11th of September, sister, I warmly invite you to come to us for the day celebrating my birthday. You will make [the day] more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if [you come?]. Give my greetings to your Cerialis. My own Aelius and my little son send their greetings. (2nd hand) I shall expect you, sister. Farewell, sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper, and hail.

(1st hand) To Sulpicia Lepidina (wife of) Cerialis. From Severa.

541. (Bowman and Thomas, 292)

[...] greetings. As I told you, sister, and promised that I would ask Brocchus and come to you, I did ask him and he replied that it was perfectly open to me, together with [...] to come to you however I can, since there are certain essential matters that [...]. You will receive my letters and as a result know what I am going to do [...]. I was [...] and shall remain at Briga. Give your Cerialis my greetings. (2nd hand) Farewell, sister, my dearest and most longed-for soul. (1st hand) To Sulpicia Lepidina (wife of) Cerialis. From Severa (wife of) B[rocchus].

Since forts were major centres of consumption in terms of foodstuffs and equipment, it comes as no surprise that lists of such commodities also survive. In some cases it is clear that the items referred to were for use by the whole fort, in other cases by the commander and his entourage with their accounts maintained by their household slaves:

542. Civilian contractors supplying the army in the period AD 104–20 (Bowman and Thomas, 180)

Account of wheat me[asured out from what
I myself have put into the barrel:
to myself, for bread [...]
to Macrinus, *modii*³¹ 7
to Felicius Victor on the order of Spectatus
modii provided, 26
in three sacks, to father,³² *modii* 19
to Macrinus, *modii* 13
to the oxherds at the wood, *modii* 8
likewise to Amabilis at the shrine, *modii* 3
[...] September, to Crescens
on the order of [Firmus?], *modii* 3
likewise [...]
to Macr[inus], *modii* 15(?)
likewise to Ma[...], *modii* 3+³³
to father [...], *modii* 2
September 26th
to Lu[...], the [Ben]eficiar[ius],³⁴ *modii* 6
to Felicius Victor, *modii* 15
for plaited loaves, to you, *modii* 2
to Crescens, *modii* 9
to the legionary soldiers
on the order of Firmus, *modii* 11+
to Candidus, *modii* [...]

to you, in a sack [...]
 to you, [...]
 to Lucco, in charge of the pigs [...]
 to Primus, (slave?) of Lucius [...]
 to you [...]
 to Lucco for his own use [...]
 likewise that which I have sent (?) [...]
 in [...]
 to father, in charge of the oxen [...]
 likewise, within the measure [...]
 15 pounds yield 15+ pounds [...]
 total, *modii* [...]
 likewise to myself, for bread, *modii* [...]
 total of wheat, *modii* 320½

On the reverse side of the accounts in §542 is the draft of a complaint addressed in all probability to the provincial governor concerning violent treatment at the hands of army personnel and the failure to gain redress through the normal channels. Significantly, the writing on both sides of the tablet is identical:

543. (Bowman and Thomas, 344)

[...] all the more [...] goods [...] or pour them away. As an honest man I beg your majesty not to allow me, an innocent man, to be beaten with rods and, sir, [...] I was unable to complain to the Prefect because he was detained by ill-health. I have complained to the *Beneficiarius* [... Cen]turions of his unit. I beg your mercy not to allow me, someone from overseas and an innocent man about whose good faith you may enquire, to have been beaten with rods until the blood flowed as if I had committed some crime.

The same person again was responsible for a list of monies received and amounts still outstanding:

544. (Bowman and Thomas, 181)

... [C]andidus:	2(?) denarii
For timbers bought:	7(?) denarii
Tunic:	3(?) denarii
From Tetricus:	[...]
From Primus:	2½(?) denarii
From Alio the vet.:	10+ denarii
From Vitalis, the bath attendant:	3(?) denarii

Total:	34½ denarii
The remainder owe:	
Ingenuus:	7 denarii
Acranius:	3 denarii
Vardullian horsemen:	7 denarii
Companion of Tagmatis, the flag bearer:	3 denarii
Total:	20 denarii

Another letter, which sheds considerable light on commodity-dealing, seems to involve characters already mentioned in §542:

545. (Bowman and Thomas, 343)

Octavius to his brother Candidus, greetings. 100 lbs of sinew from Marinus I will settle up. From the time you wrote to me on this matter he has made no mention of it to me. I have written to you many times that I have bought nearly 5000 *modii* of grain still in its ears and on this account I need money. Unless you send me some – at least 500 denarii – the result will be that I shall lose what I put down as a deposit – about 300 denarii³⁵ – and shall be embarrassed. For this reason I am asking you – send me some money as soon as possible. The hides that you write about are at Catterick – write that they be given to me as well as the wagon you mention in your letter, and write to me what is with the wagon. I would have already been for them except I did not wish to injure the draught animals while the roads are bad. See Tertius about the 8½ denarii he received from Fatalis. He has not credited them to my account. Rest assured that I have completed the 170 hides and have 119 *modii* of threshed cereal. Be sure to send me money so that I can have ears of grain on the threshing floor. I have already threshed all that I had. An associate of our friend Frontus has been here. He was wanting me to hand the hides over to him and was ready to pay cash. I told him I would give him the hides by the 1st of March. He decided he would come on January 13th, but he didn't turn up, nor did he bother to secure them since he had hides. If he had given the money I would have handed them over to him. I hear Frontinius Julius has for sale at a high price the leather goods he got from here at 5 denarii apiece. Greet Spectatus I[...] and [...] Firmus. I have received letters from Gleuco. Farewell. Vindolanda.

cf.

546. A request for information on a business deal (Bowman and Thomas, 645)

Maiores to his Maritimus, greetings. I wanted you to know that a letter has been sent to me by my father, in which he writes to me that I should let him know

what I'll have done about the [...]. But if you have done business in that regard with the Caesariani, see that you write back to me so that I can write to my father to this effect. If you have made any payments in the meantime, I shall immediately issue you with grain to the amount that may be raised. While I was writing this to you, I was warming the bed. I wish that you enjoy the best of fortune [...] sends you greetings. Farewell.

(In margin) [If you] intend to send a boy [to me], send a note in your own hand with him so that I can be all the more reassured.

(Back) At Vindolanda. To Cocceius Maritimus from Maior.

While at least some of the persons mentioned in the passages above are likely to have been military personnel, the following letters are clearly transactions between civilians, even if the goods they deal in show they were suppliers to the military:

547. (Bowman and Thomas, 309)

Metto to his Advectus, very many greetings. I have sent you wooden items by means of Saco:

hubs, 34 in number

axles for carts, 38 in number

among them an axle turned on the lathe, 1 in number

spokes, 300 in number

boards for a bed, 26 in number

seats, 8 in number

knots?, 2 in number

shelves, 20 in number

[...], 29 in number

benches?, 6 in number

I have sent you goat-skins, 6 in number

(2nd hand) [I hope] you are well, brother.

548. (Bowman and Thomas, 642)

I shall gladly carry out. The hundred roofing shingles which I have with Romanius, if you don't need them, transport them when your wagons occasionally come from time to time. As regards these, keep an eye on your boys lest anything [...] Greet Ingenua and [...] and [...]. Farewell.

To Gabinius [...]. From Bel[...]

549. (Bowman and Thomas, 643)

Florus to his Calavirus, greetings. The closed small box and whatever items are locked inside give to [...] the *beneficiarius* [...] he will seal it with his ring.

Florus to his Titus, greetings. Brother, the axe that you may have in your hut, give it to Gam[...] who will give [...] and in order that he gives it back.

(Back) And do not give it to him unless he immediately places it in the wagon. Ingenua your daughter sends you her greetings. Give to Caelovirus [...]

In contrast to the large scale of supplies for the fort, other accounts are on a more domestic level, perhaps connected with the headquarters, and certainly recorded by slaves. They date from the period AD 97–103, and the mention of ‘lords’ in the final line and Briga (cf. §541) suggests the writer was a slave belonging to Cerialis:

550. (Bowman and Thomas, 190)

[...] for the festival [...] denarii

[...] for the festival [...] denarii

[...] for the festival [...]

19th of June

of barley, [...]

of beer, [...]

20th of June

of barley, *modii* 4

of beer, *modii* 2

[21st of Ju]ne of barley [...]

[...] to the granary

[...]

[...] *modii* 2

22nd of June

of barley, *modii* 5½

Allatus?, of [Ma]ssic wine [...]

23rd of June

of barley, *modii* 5½

of wine, *modius* 1, *sextarii*³⁶ 14

of beer, *modii* 3

24th of June

of barley, *modii* 6+

of beer, *modii* 3, *sextarii* [...]

of wine, *modius* 1, *sextarii* 12

of sour wine, *sextarii* 2

through Privatus

of fish sauce, *sextarii* 1½

through Privatus

of grease, *sextarii* 10 as a loan (?)

to the lord for alms

through Privatus
 of wine, *modius* 1 for the festival
 of the goddess
 of wine, *sextarii* 12
 through Privatus
 25th of June
 of barley, *sextarii* 11 ½ (?)
 the lords [have] rem[ained] at Briga

That officers and their families enjoyed a high standard of living is suggested by the following, which probably came from the *Praetorium*:

551. (Bowman and Thomas, 191)

[...] denarii, [...], spices [...], roe-deer [...], salt [...], young pork [...], ham [...], in [...], wheat [...], venison [...], in [...], for preserving [...], roe-deer [...]. Total, denarii [...]. (2nd hand) Total, denarii 20+. (1st hand) cereal [...], denarii [...]³⁷

Since slaves were given the task of maintaining accounts, it is not surprising to find contacts at this level between households:

552. (Bowman and Thomas, 301)

Severus to his Candidus, greetings. As regards the expenses for the Saturnalia³⁸ I ask you, brother, to see to them at a price of 4 or 6 asses³⁹ and radishes to the value of not less than half a denarius.

Farewell brother.

To Candidus, (slave of) Genialis from Severus, the Adjutant [...]

cf.

553. (Bowman and Thomas, 302)

[...] bruised beans: two *modii*, twenty chickens, 100 apples – if you can find nice ones – 100 or 200 eggs – if they are for sale there at a reasonable price [...], eight *sextarii* of fish-sauce [...] a *modius* of olives.

To [...] of Verecundus.

In other cases, the accounts and letters that survive show what are perhaps more personal aspects of life: details for instance of a return journey from Vindolanda to York (?):

554. (Bowman and Thomas, 185)

[...] for the wine:	$\frac{1}{2}$ denarius
July (8th–14th) ⁴⁰	[at Isurium] (Aldborough, Yorks.)
for wine	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
July (9th–14th)	
for wine	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
July (10th–14th)	
[6 lines]	
[...]	8
for wine	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
of barley	1 <i>modius</i> , $\frac{1}{2}$ denarius 1 as
wagon axles	
two for a carriage	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ denarii
salt and fodder	1 denarius
At Isurium (Aldborough) for wine	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
At Cataractonium (Catterick,	
Yorks.) for lodgings	$\frac{1}{2}$ denarius
for wine	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
at Vinovia (Binchester) for vests(?)	$\frac{1}{4}$ denarius
of wheat [...]	
This makes	78 $\frac{3}{4}$ denarii
Grand total	94 $\frac{3}{4}$ denarii

A letter between auxiliary soldiers:

555. (Bowman and Thomas, 310)

Chrauttius to Veldeius his brother and old messmate, very many greetings, and I ask you, my brother Veldeius – I am surprised that you have not written anything back to me for such a long time – if you have heard anything from our elders⁴¹ or ... in what unit he is, and to give him my personal greetings and Virilis too, the veterinary doctor. Ask him if you can send through one of our friends the shears he promised me in exchange. And I ask you, brother Virilis, to give my greetings to our sister Thuttena and to Velbuteius. Write back to us [...] he is. I hope you are enjoying the best of fortune. Farewell. London. To Veldeideus,⁴² groom of the governor, from his brother Chrauttius.

cf.

556. (Bowman and Thomas, 311)

Solemnis to his brother Paris,⁴³ very many greetings. I want you to know that I am in good health, as I hope you are in turn, you most neglectful man, who

have sent me not so much as a single letter. But I think that I am behaving in a more considerate manner in writing to you [...] to you brother, [...] my old mate. Pass on my greetings to Diligens and Cogitatus and Corinthus, and I ask that you send me the names [...]

To Paris [...] of the 3rd [Coh]ort of Batavians, from Solemnis.

A request for clothing:

557. (Bowman and Thomas, 346)

[...] to you [...] pairs of socks from Sattua, two pairs of sandals and underpants, two pairs of sandals [...] Greet [...]ndes, Elpis, Iu[...] [...]enus, Tetricus and all the messmates with whom I hope you live in the greatest good fortune.

A reference to oysters:

558. (Bowman and Thomas, 299)

[...] which is the main reason for my letter: that you are steadfast. A friend sent me fifty oysters from Cordonovi, so that all the more speedily [...]

To Lucius, Decurion.

A request for beer:

559. (Bowman and Thomas, 628 = *Britannia* 27 (1996), p. 324)

Masclus to his king Cerialis, greetings. I ask you, sir, that you tell us what you want us to have done tomorrow. Should we all return with the standard to the cross-roads, or just half of us? [...] most fortunate and be well disposed to me. Farewell. My fellow soldiers have no beer. I request that you order some to be sent.

(Back) To the Prefect Flavius Cerialis, from Masclus the Decurion.

From elsewhere in Britain comes a variety of material allowing us to glimpse through often transient references the interests and concerns of the province's inhabitants, their enthusiasms, loves, business worries and advertising.

560. Missing lances at Carlisle (*Britannia* 29 [1998], pp. 55–63, c. AD 100)

Docilis to the Prefect Augurinus, greetings. Just as you ordered, I have appended below all the names of the lancers who were missing lances, either those who did not have fighting lances or the smaller spears or regulation swords:

The troop of Genialis senior: Verecundus – one fighting lance and two smaller spears

The troop of Albinus [...]

[The troop of ...]: Docca – two smaller spears

The troop of Docilis: Pastor – two smaller spears, Felicio – one fighting lance

The troop of Sollemnis: [...]atus – one fighting lance, two smaller spears

The troop of Mansuetus: [...]s – one fighting lance, Victorinus [...]rae – one fighting lance

The troop of Martialis: [...]so – one fighting lance

The troop of Genialis: Festus – two smaller spears, Maior – two smaller spears

[...] smaller spears

[...] one fighting lance

The troop of Victor: [...]

May you and your family keep well, Lord Augurinus.

561. A letter from London (*RIB*, II, 4, 2443.7)

Rufus, son of Callisunus, (sends) greetings to Epillicus and all his associates. I believe you know I am very well. If you have made the list, please send it. Make sure you do everything carefully so that you turn that girl into cash.

562. Two legal documents from London (*Britannia* 34 [2003], pp. 41–51, c. AD 75–125)

Vegetus, assistant of Montanus, slave of the August Emperor and one-time slave of Iucundus, has bought and acquired the girl Fortunata, or whatever name she goes by, a Diablintian by nationality, from Albicianus [...] for 600 denarii. That the girl in question is transferred in good health and is warranted not to wander or run off, but if anyone [lays claim] to the girl in question or any share in her, [...] in the tablet which [he has] wri[tt]en and [swo]rn by the [spir]it of the emperor [...]

(*Britannia* 25 [1994], pp. 302–4, AD 118)

In the consulship of the emperor Trajan Hadrian Caesar Augustus for the 2nd time and Gnaeus Fuscus Salinator on March 14th. On arrival at the property in question, i.e. the wood Verlucionium, which measures 15 arepennia (4.6 acres) more or less, and is in the territory of the Cantiaci, in the *pagus* of Dibussu [...]

bounded by the heirs of [...] and the heirs of Caesennius Vitalis and the local road, Lucius Julius Bellicus stated that he had bought it from Titus Valerius Silvinius for 40 denarii, as is contained in the deed of purchase.

Lucius Julius Bellicus attested that he [...]

cf. *RIB*, II, 2443.13 which seems to be a contract on a house.

563. A will from Wales (*Britannia* 35 [2004], pp. 347f.)

Before I die, [I command] that [...] be my heir. Let all others be disinherited for me [...] on no other terms [than] that I shall give, have given, shall have commanded to be given to each [...], and you [...] enter upon and accept my estate [within] the hundred (days) after my death in which you know or can know that you are my legitimate heir in the presence of witnesses; let the heirs be those who know that they are [...] of that property [...]. But if you do not thus accept [my] inheritance, if you refuse to enter upon it, may you be [disinherited ...] whom I have instituted as [my] heir.

564. From Leicester, a fragment of pottery (*RIB*, II, 7, 2501.586)

Verecunda the actress, Lucius the gladiator.

Inscriptions on rings

565. From Castell Collen, Powys (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.19)

Sweet Love.

566. From Bedford (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.5)

Long life to Eusebius.

567. From Wroxeter (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.47)

Love (me). I love (you).

568. From London (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.75)

Give me life.

569. From Chesters (*RIB*, II, 3, 2422.80)

Who will separate mine and yours while life lasts?

Inscriptions on tiles

570. From Binchester (*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.146)

Armea has taught me to say ‘thank you, but no’ to all others.

571. From London (*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.147)

Austalis has been wandering about by himself every day for thirteen days.

**572. On a box flue-tile from Leicester
(*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.3)**

Primus has made sixty of these.

573. From Silchester (*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.1)

Clementinus made this box flue-tile.

**574. A bath-house *pila*⁴⁴ brick from Wiggonhold, W.
Sussex (*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.2)**

Twenty *pila*-bricks, four voussoir (arch) flue-tiles, 560 box flue-tiles.

575. A brick from Silchester (*RIB*, II, 5, 2491.159)

Enough.

**576. A building stone from Norton nr. Malton,
Yorks. (*RIB*, I, 712)**

Good luck to the Genius (spirit) of the place. Use this goldsmith’s shop to your good fortune, young slave.

Advertising

**577. Painted inscription on an amphora from
Southwark (*RIB*, II, 6, 2492.24)**

Lucius Tettius Africanus’ excellent fish-sauce from Antipolis (Antibes, France).

Oculists’ stamps: four sided small stone slabs used for impressing the details of the remedy onto the material itself:

578. From Sandy, Bedfordshire (*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.2)

- (a) Gaius Valerius Amandus' vinegar ointment for running eyes.
- (b) Gaius Valerius Amandus' drops for cloudy vision.
- (c) Gaius Valerius Valentinus' celandine ointment after an attack of inflammation of the eyes.
- (d) Gaius Valerius Valentinus' mixture for clearing the vision.

**579. From Kenchester, Herefordshire
(*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.3)**

- (a) Titus Vindacius Ariovistus' nard ointment.
- (b) Titus Vindacius Ariovistus' green ointment.
- (c) Titus Vindacius Ariovistus' infallible ointment.
- (d) Titus Vindacius Ariovistus' frankincense ointment.

**580. From Kenchester, Herefordshire
(*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.21)**

- (a) Aurelius Polychronius' 2-stone ointment after (an attack of inflammation of the eyes).
- (b) Polychronius' copper oxide ointment.
- (c) Aurelius Polychronius' swan-white ointment for attacks (of inflammation of the eyes).
- (d) Polychronius' gall ointment.

581. From Cirencester (*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.4)

- (a) Atticus' frankincense ointment with egg, for all pains.
- (b) Atticus' mild ointment for all pains after an attack of inflammation of the eyes.
- (c) Atticus' poppy ointment for all pains.
- (d) Atticus' quince ointment for soreness (of the eyes).

582. From Lydney Park, Glos. (*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.9)

- (a) Julius Jucundus' ointment as drops.
- (b) Julius Jucundus' quince-oil ointment.
- (c) Julius Jucundus' ointment for application with a small sponge.

583. From St Albans (*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.11)

- (a) Lucius Julius Juvenis' anti-irritant balsam.
- (b) [Lucius Julius Juvenis'] myrrh ointment, twice a day with egg after an attack of inflammation of the eyes.
- (c) Flavius Secundus' ointment for white scars.

584. From London (*RIB*, II, 4, 2446.27)⁴⁵

- (a) Gaius Silvius Tetricus' misy ointment for infections and scars.
- (b) Gaius Silvius Tetricus' ointment for attacks of inflammation of the eyes.
- (c) Gaius Silvius Tetricus' fragrant ointment for soreness of the eyes.
- (d) Gaius Silvius Tetricus' biprosopum for at[tacks of inflammation of the eyes].

For the most part, however, the ordinary soldier or civilian of Britain gained a lasting memorial only at death. Here it is we learn of length of service, the span of life, and the love between husband and wife, parents and offspring, master and servant:

The army**585. A very old soldier from Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 363)**

To the spirits of the departed. Julius Valens, veteran of the II Legion Augusta, lived 100 years. Julia Secundina, his wife, and Julius Martinus, his son, had this made.

586. An armourer from Bath (*RIB*, I, 156)

Julius Vitalis, Armourer (*fabriensis*) of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, with nine years' service, aged twenty-nine, a Belgian, buried at the expense of the Guild of armourers. Here he lies.

**587. A medical officer from Housesteads
(*RIB*, I, 1618)**

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Anicius Ingenuus, medical officer (*medicus ordinarius*) serving in the 1st Cohort of Tungrians. He lived twenty-five years.

588. A Brigantian serving at Mumrills (*RIB*, I, 2142)

To the spirits of the departed. Nectovellius, son of Vindex, aged twenty-nine, with nine years' service, a Brigantian, served in the 2nd Thracian Cohort.

589. A soldier of the VI Victrix from London (*RIB*, I, 11)

To the spirits of the departed. Flavius Agricola, soldier of the VI Legion Victrix lived forty-two years ten days. Albia Faustina had this made for her peerless husband.

590. A standard-bearer from York (*RIB*, I, 673)

Lucius Duccius Rufinus, son of Lucius, of the Voltinian voting-tribe, from Vienne, Standard-bearer (*signifer*) of the IX Legion, aged twenty-eight, lies here.

591. From Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 257)

Gaius Valerius, son of Gaius, of the Maecian voting-tribe, soldier of the IX Legion, Standard-bearer of the century of Hospes, aged thirty-five, with fourteen years' service, stipulated in his will that this be set up. Here he lies.

592. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 525)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Decimus Capienius Urbicus of the Voltinian voting-tribe, from Vienne, Standard-bearer with twenty-four years' service, aged forty-four. His heir had this made.

593. A soldier from Bath (*RIB*, I, 157)

Gaius Murrius Modestus, son of Gaius, of the Arniensian voting-tribe, from Forum Julii (Fréjus), soldier of the II Legion Adiutrix Pia Fidelis, [in the century] of Julius Secundus, aged twenty-five, with [...] years' service, lies here.

594. A soldier from Bath (*RIB*, I, 158)

To the spirits of the departed. Marcus Valerius Latinus, son of Marcus, citizen of Equestris, soldier of the XX Legion, aged thirty-five, with twenty years' service, lies buried here.

595. A soldier from Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 256)

Lucius Sempronius Flavinus, soldier of the IX Legion, in the century of Babudius Severus, with seven years' service, aged thirty, a Spaniard of the Galerian voting-tribe, from Clunia.

596. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 360)

To the spirits of the departed. Julius Julianus, a soldier of the II Legion Augusta, with eighteen years' service, aged forty, lies here. His wife Amanda had this set up.

597. An *emeritus* (veteran) from Templebrough (*RIB*, I, 620)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Crotus, son of Vindex, *emeritus* of the 4th Cohort of Gauls, aged forty. Flavia Peregrina, his most devoted wife, made this monument and set up this inscription to her most devoted husband.

598. A soldier from Wroxeter (*RIB*, I, 292, restored)

[Titus F]laminius, son of Titus, of the Pollian voting-tribe, from Fa[...], aged forty-five, with twenty-two years' service, soldier of the XIV Legion Gemina. I

served as a soldier and here I am. Read [this] and be happy, more or less. The gods prohibit you from the wine-grape and water when you enter Tartarus. Live honourably while your star grants you time for life.

599. A camp-prefect from Chester (RIB, I, 490, restored)

To the spirits of the departed. Marcus Aurelius Alexander, Camp-Prefect (*praefectus castrorum*) of the XX Legion [Valeria Victrix], a Syrian from Os[roene, li]ved seventy-two years [...]

600. An *optio* from Chester (RIB, I, 492)

To the spirits of the departed. Caecilius Avitus from Emerita Augusta, Deputy-centurion (*optio*) of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, with fifteen years' service, aged thirty-four. His heir had this made.

601. An *optio* from Chester (RIB, I, 544)

[...] a Deputy-centurion (*optio*) in the century of Lucilius Ingenuus, awaiting promotion, who died by shipwreck. (Here) he lies.

602. A centurion from York (RIB, I, 675)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Titus Flavius Flavinus, Centurion of the VI Legion. His heir, Gaius Classicius Aprilis, ordered this to be made before his death.

603. An auxiliary standard-bearer from Corbridge (RIB, I, 1172)

To the spirits of the departed. Flavinus, trooper of the *Ala* (squadron) Petriana, Standard-bearer in the troop of Candidus, aged twenty-five with seven years' service, lies here.

604. A *cornicularius* from Great Chesters (RIB, I, 1742)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Aelius Mercurialis, Adjutant (*cornicularius*), his sister Vacia made this.

605. An armament-keeper from Castlesteads (RIB, I, 2003)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Gemellus, Armament-keeper (*custos armorum*). His heir, the Centurion Flavius Hilario, had this made.

606. Two soldiers from Ambleside
(JRS, 53 [1963], p. 160)

To the good gods and the departed. Flavius Fuscinus, reservist, lived sixty years.
 To the good gods and the departed. Flavius Romanus, Record-keeper (*actarius*),
 lived thirty-five years and was killed in camp by enemy action.

The family

607. From York (RIB, I, 690)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Simplicia Florentina, most innocent soul,
 who lived ten months. Felicius Simplex, her father, (a soldier) in the VI Legion
 Victrix (set this up).

608. From York (RIB, I, 685)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Flavia Augustina who lived thirty-nine
 years, seven months, eleven days, her son Saenius Augustinus who lived one
 year, three days, [...] (a daughter?) who lived one year, nine months, five days.
 Gaius Aeresius Saenus, veteran of the VI Legion Victrix, had this set up for his
 beloved wife and himself.

609. From York (RIB, I, 684)

To the spirits of the departed. Corellia Optata, aged thirteen. You secret spirits
 who inhabit the Acherusian realm of Pluto, and whom the meagre ashes and
 shade, the mere semblance of a body, seek after the brief light of life, I, the
 father of an innocent daughter, the victim of unfair hope, pitiaibly bewail this her
 final end. Quintus Corellius Fortis, her father, had this set up.

610. From York (RIB, I, 677)

To the memory of Valerius Theodorianus from Nomentum. He lived thirty-five
 years, six months. His mother and heir, Emilia Theodora, had this set up.

611. From York (RIB, I, 686)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Julia Brica, aged thirty-one, and Sem-
 pronia Martina, aged six. Sempronius Martinus had this set up.

612. From York (RIB, I, 687)

To Julia Fortunata from Sardinia. (She was) a loyal wife to her husband, Ver-
 ecundius Diogenes.

613. From York (*RIB*, I, 688)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Julia Velva who lived a most dutiful life for fifty years. Her heir, Aurelius Mercurialis, had this made in his lifetime for himself and his family.

614. From York (*RIB*, I, 695)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Eglecta, aged thirty, who lies here beside her son Crescens, aged three. Antonius Stephanus had this set up for his wife.

615. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 155)

To the spirits of the departed. Gaius Calpurnius Receptus, Priest of the goddess Sulis, lived seventy-five years. Calpurnia Trifosa, his freedwoman and wife, had this made.

616. From Bath (*RIB*, I, 164)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Successa Petronia, who lived three years, four months, nine days. Ve [...]omulus and Victoria Sabina set this up for their dearest daughter.

617. From Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 251)

To the spirits of the departed. Flavius Helius, a Greek by birth, lived forty years. Flavia Ingenua set this up for her husband.

618. From Lincoln (*RIB*, I, 252)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Gaius Julius Calenus of the Galerian voting-tribe, from Lyons, veteran of the VI Legion Victrix Pia Fidelis. Julia Sempronia, his daughter, (set this up).

619. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 357)

To the spirits of the departed. Titus Flavius Candidus from Ulpia Traiana, soldier of the II Legion Augusta, with seven years' service, aged twenty-seven. His brother had this set up.

620. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 359)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Gaius Julius Decuminus, veteran of the II Legion Augusta, aged forty-five. His wife had this made.

621. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 369)

To the spirits of the departed. Tadia Vallaunius lived sixty-five years and Tadius Exuperatus, her son, lived thirty-seven years, having died on the German expedition. Tadia Exuperata, her devoted daughter, set this up for her mother and brother beside her father's tomb.

622. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 373)

To the spirits of the departed and the memory of Julia Secundina, his devoted mother, who lived seventy-five years, Gaius Julius Martinus, her son, had this made.⁴⁶

623. From Caerleon (*RIB*, I, 375)

To the spirits of the departed. Julia Veneria, aged thirty-two. Julius Alesander, her devoted husband, and Julius Belicianus, her son, had this monument made.

624. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 594)

Hid beneath this earth is she who once was Aelia Matrona and lived for twenty-eight years, two months, eight days, together with Marcus Julius Maximus her son who lived six years, three months, twenty days, and Campania Dubitata her mother who lived for fifty years. Julius Maximus, soldier seconded to the Governor's guard (*singularis consularis*) from the squadron of Sarmatians, her husband, set up this memorial to his incomparable wife, to his son who was most devoted to his father, and to his most steadfast mother-in-law.

625. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 537)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Lucius Festinius Probus, his son who lived two years, twenty-nine days, his father, Lucius Sempronius Probianus, had this made.

626. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 558)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Flavius Callimorphus who lived forty-two years and of Serapion who lived three years, six months. Thesaeus had this made for brother and son.

627. From Old Penrith (*RIB*, I, 931)

To the spirits of the departed. Aurelius lived eleven years. Avo, his most devoted father, set this up as much for himself as for his son.

628. From Old Penrith (*RIB*, I, 932)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Marcus Cocceius Nomus, aged six. Here he lies.

629. From Old Penrith (*RIB*, I, 937)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Ylas, his dearest foster-child aged thirteen, Claudius Severus, military Tribune, (set this up).

630. From Carlisle (*RIB*, I, 955)

To the spirits of the departed. Flavius Antigonus Papias, a citizen of Greece, lived sixty years more or less and returned to the Fates his soul, which he had on loan that long. Septimia Do[...] (set this up).

631. From South Shields (*RIB*, I, 1065)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Regina, his freedwoman and wife, a Catuvellaunian by race, aged thirty, Barates of Palmyra (set this up).

632. From Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1482)

Sacred to the spirits of the departed (and) of Fabia Honorata. Fabius Honoratus, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of Vangiones and Aurelia Eglectiane made this for their most sweet daughter.

633. From Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1483)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to his sister Ursa, his wife Julia, and his son Canio, Lurio the German (set this up).

634. From Risingham (*RIB*, I, 1250)

Sacred to the spirits of the departed (and) to Aurelia Lepulla, his most devoted mother, Dionysius Fortunatus, her son, (set this up). May the earth lie light upon thee.

635. From Carvoran (*RIB*, I, 1828)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Aurelia Aia, daughter of Titus, from Salona, Aurelius Marcus of the Century of Obsequens (set this up) for his most holy wife who lived thirty-three years without any stain.

636. From Birdoswald (*RIB*, I, 1919)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Aurelius Concordius, who lived one year, five days, the son of the Tribune Aurelius Julianus.

637. From Wroxeter (*RIB*, I, 295)

To the spirits of the departed. Placida aged fifty-five. (Set up) on the instructions of her husband of thirty years.

To the spirits of the departed. Deucusus aged fifteen. (Set up) on the instructions of his brother.

Master and servant, patron and client

638. From York (*RIB*, I, 683)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Aelia Severa, honourable woman, formerly wife of Caecilius Rufus. She lived twenty-seven years, nine months, four days. Caecilius Musicus, his freedman, set this up.

639. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 560)

To the spirits of the departed. Atilianus and Antiatilianus, aged ten, Protus aged twelve. Pompeius Optatus, their master, had this made.

640. From Chester (*RIB*, I, 559)

To the spirits of the departed (and) to Etacontius his well-deserving freedman, Gaius Asurius Fortis, his patron, set this up.

641. From South Shields (*RIB*, I, 1064, restored)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Victor, a Moor by race, aged twenty, freedman of Numerianus, trooper in the 1st squadron of Asturians, who most devotedly co[n]duc[t]ed (him to his grave).

642. From High Rochester (*RIB*, I, 1290)

To the spirits of the departed (and) of Felicio, a freedman, who lived twenty years.

643. From Halton Chesters (*RIB*, I, 1436)

To the spirits of the departed (and) [...] of Hardalio. The guild of his fellow slaves set this up to one who deserved well.

NOTES

1 THE EARLIEST CONTACTS

- 1 *Pytheas*, pp. 19ff.; cf. Rivet and Smith, p. 39.
- 2 The spelling here with P is not found in all manuscripts of Diodorus, though it clearly represents the older tradition which later scribes ‘corrected’. A similar process was evidently at work in the transmission of Strabo’s *Geography*, since it is only in Book II that the use of P in spelling Britain begins to occur. See further Rivet and Smith, pp. 39f.
- 3 The sense here, lit. ‘inwards’, is obscure and disputed. Interpretation as ‘up-Channel’ is favoured by Hawkes, but many commentators despair of extracting any clear understanding, cf. Maxwell (1), p. 298.
- 4 Thus Rivet and Smith pp. 487–9 identify the island, equating it with the more frequent name Vectis. Maxwell (1), however, argues for the traditional identification with St Michael’s Mount.
- 5 The erroneous view of the relative positions of Britain and Spain persisted in ancient writers until Ptolemy in the second century AD. It was later to recur in writers like Orosius in the fifth century AD and beyond. See further Ogilvie and Richmond, pp. 166f.
- 6 Though Caesar’s description certainly suggests identification of Mona with the Isle of Man, Rivet and Smith, pp. 41 and 419f. suggest that this, like references to Mona in other writers, should be taken as signifying Anglesey.
- 7 Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II, 187: ‘Pytheas of Massilia writes that this (six months’ continuous sun or darkness) occurs in the island of Thyle, which is six days’ sail north of Britain, and some assert also in Mona, which is about 200 miles from the British town of Camulodunum (Colchester).’ Cf. *Natural History*, IV, 104: ‘The most remote island of all that are recorded is Thyle, where I have pointed out there are no nights at the (summer) solstice, when the sun is passing through the constellation of Cancer, and in contrast no days at midwinter. Some think that this happens for six months without a break.’
- 8 Hawkes, pp. 36f. sees in these details information relevant to the state of northern Britain at the time; cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II, 217: ‘Pytheas of Massilia states that to the north of Britain the tides rise 80 cubits (120 feet).’ See further Cunliffe (3).

2 THE ROMAN PERIOD

- 1 Was Caesar misled by traders hoping to keep their traffic in the metal to themselves, or is this simply the view of Cornish tin gained by someone approaching Britain from the south-east?

- 2 Though the use of woad was again remarked upon in the first century AD by Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, III, 6, 51, he admits ignorance as to why, a salutary reminder to us perhaps that even supposedly key works in antiquity could be less available to a general readership than they are today: 'They dye their bodies with woad – whether for decoration or some other reason is unknown.'
- 3 For British tactics in using the chariot see Caesar, *Gallie War*, IV, 33 and V, 16–17.
- 4 Cf. Caesar, *Gallie War*, V, 21.
- 5 This amply refutes the claim made in the fourth century AD by Eutropius and repeated by writers like Orosius (5th C.), Jordanes (6th C.) and Bede (8th C.) that the Orkneys were conquered under Claudius: Eutropius VII, 13, 3: 'He also added to the Roman empire certain islands called the Orkneys situated beyond Britain in Ocean.'
- 6 Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II, 186: 'The longest day amounts to ... 17 equinoctial hours in Britain.'
- 7 For ease of reference I associate under the single heading *Epitome* both the fragmentary remains of books and the true epitomes of otherwise lost books composed by Xiphilinus in the eleventh century. Book and chapter references follow the traditional divisions given in the margin of the Loeb edition.
- 8 Cf. Solinus 22.20 (3rd C.): 'The land is occupied partly by barbarians who from childhood have the pictures of various animals put on their bodies by tattoo artists.'

3 THE INVASIONS OF CAESAR

- 1 Caesar's motives for invading in 55, given here and in Chapter 22, hardly stand up to close scrutiny. In Chapter 20 he represents it as no more than a reconnaissance expedition – though what is the 'great advantage' he mentions? In Chapter 22 it has become far more important than ensuring a totally pacified north Gaul. And if there was not enough time left in 55 for a renewed campaign in Gaul, how was there time for an arguably far more hazardous venture over the Channel? The answer lies not in Gaul but in the politics of Rome, where Caesar's rivals, Pompey and Crassus, were consuls and were expected to proceed to Proconsular provinces in 54. There they might well cover themselves in glory; by an expedition to Britain in 55, on the other hand, Caesar clearly hoped to steal a march on them and grab the headlines.
- 2 Caesar's claim to be aware of possible renewed trouble sounds decidedly hollow in view of the numerous problems already encountered as a result of his ignorance of local conditions in terms of enemy fighting tactics and the weather. Subsequent events, like the attack on the VII legion, suggest that he continued to be largely dependent upon reacting to British initiatives.
- 3 By acting as infantry, charioteers had an immediate advantage over cavalry, which as yet lacked the stability provided by stirrups.
- 4 Unlike the 55 expedition, that of 54 has no mention of motive. In view of his mention of British help to the Gauls (*Gallie War*, IV, 20) had Caesar determined on a full punitive invasion? Was he hoping to use overwhelming force to win a speedy victory and add southern Britain to the empire? Is the relative failure of the expedition to come up to expectations the reason for no mention of his purpose?
- 5 Caesar's failure to take account of the problems caused by the weather the previous year was doubtless motivated by the desire for a speedy advance against the enemy before they could consolidate defensive positions and reliant upon the luck that had so often attended his military campaigns in the past.
- 6 Cassivellaunus' intention was clearly to deny Caesar an all-out battle, which Caesar would doubtless have won, and instead to draw him further inland while at the same time minimising damage to Catuvellaunian territory and preventing Caesar from

living off the land by a scorched-earth policy. In this way, he clearly hoped eventually either to cut Caesar's lines of communication or to force him to retreat rather than be faced with starvation among his troops. Hence Caesar's reaction to the overtures made by the Trinovantes.

- 7 The use of Commius, who was with Caesar, suggests that the initiative for negotiations may have lain as much with Caesar as with Cassivellaunus; by this time both had strong motives for disengagement.
- 8 A similar instance of confusion attributes to Caesar the use of elephants in order to startle the natives – a tactic employed in reality by the Emperor Claudius: Polyaeus (2nd C. AD), *Strategemata (Stratagems)* VIII, 23, 5: 'Caesar attempted to cross a large river in Britain, but Cassivellaunus, the king of the Britons, prevented him with many horsemen and chariots. Caesar had in his train a very large elephant, a creature never before seen by the Britons. This he equipped with iron plates and placed a large tower on it, stationing in this archers and slingers. He then ordered them to enter the river. The Britons were struck with terror at the sight of a beast that was enormous and that they had never seen before.'
- 9 Cf. *Ad fratrem*, II, 16, 4: 'How wonderful was your letter to me from Britain! I feared the Ocean; I feared the island's shore. I do not underrate the rest (of your enterprise), but it contains more in terms of hope than fear, and I am more concerned by anticipation than by apprehension ... What geography, what manner of things and place, what customs, what tribes, what battles, indeed what a commander you have!'
- 10 Cf. Plutarch, *Caesar*, 23.3 (§469).

4 CAESAR TO CLAUDIUS

- 1 See further Stevens (1).
- 2 Dated by many to 28 BC.
- 3 Cf. Salway (1), pp. 51f., Creighton pp. 19–31.
- 4 See, however, Van Arsdell, pp. 319–21.
- 5 This constituted only half the amount fixed by Augustus.

5 THE CLAUDIAN INVASION

- 1 Suetonius, *Galba*, 7, records another delay in the expedition caused by the illness of Galba: 'Galba was in great favour with Claudius, who took him into his circle of friends and regarded him with such great esteem that when Galba suddenly contracted some minor ailment, the date of the British expedition was postponed.'
- 2 For the significance of these, see Eichholz.
- 3 On the timing of Claudius' visit to Britain, see Barrett (2).
- 4 Cf. Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, 12, 3: 'Claudius commanded the Britons beyond the seas we know of, and the Brigantes with their blue shields, to bow their necks to the chains of Rome.'
- 5 The use of the *carpentum*, a two-wheeled covered carriage, inside Rome was a mark of special distinction and usually reserved for festal occasions.
- 6 A lesser honour than a triumph, which by this time was reserved solely for the Emperor. Another participant in the invasion was Gaius Gavius Silvanus (from Taurini, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 2701): 'To Gaius Gavius Stel(?) Silvanus, son of Lucius, Leading Centurion of the VIII legion Augusta, Tribune of the 2nd cohort of the Watch, Tribune of the 13th Urban cohort, Tribune of the 12th Praetorian cohort, decorated with the *torquibus armillis phaleris* and golden crown by the deified Claudius in the British war, patron of this colony.'

6 EXPANSION OF THE PROVINCE AND REBELLION

- 1 Facilis' gravestone is further discussed by Phillips.
- 2 The text here is corrupt, and this is but one of a number of possible interpretations. See Rivet and Smith, p. 45; Salway (1), p. 100, n. 3.
- 3 This contrasts sharply with the loyalty of Britain's best-known client king, Cogidubnus: Tacitus, *Agricola*, 14: 'Certain tribal areas were given to King Cogidubnus – he in fact remained totally loyal down to our own times.'
- 4 Cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 14: 'A colony of veterans was also added.'
- 5 Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 45 (§95) describes it as achieved through deceit on the part of Cartimandua.
- 6 While we cannot doubt that Caratacus' survival instead of being put to death after the triumphal ceremonies – the usual fate of a captured enemy leader – was probably due to the impression he made in Rome, and perhaps Claudius' own admiration for his one-time adversary, the speech here placed into his mouth is a clear fiction in form, if not altogether in substance.
- 7 In a book of the *Annals* now lost.
- 8 The chronological relationship between this and Tacitus, *Histories*, III, 45 (§95) is discussed by Braund and by Hanson and Campbell.
- 9 Cf. Tacitus, *Agricola*, 14: 'Didius Gallus hung on to what had been won by his predecessors, pushing forward a few forts to more advanced positions and by this sought to gain credit for enlarging his sphere of operations.'
- 10 On the significance of the passage for the rebellion, contrast Stevens (2), E. Birley (1), pp. 1f., Salway (1), p. 109, Frere (1), p. 68.
- 11 Prasutagus clearly did not appreciate Roman practice in terms of inheritance, cf. Ulpian, I, 19.1.2: 'This in particular is the duty of the Procurator of Caesar, that by his command a slave of Caesar can take possession of an inheritance, and if Caesar is designated heir, the Procurator carries this out by taking possession of the inheritance.'
- 12 The credibility of Dio as a source for the Boudiccan rebellion is questioned by Syme, pp. 762–6.
- 13 The inability of the Britons to endure abuses also figures in Tacitus, *Agricola*, 13: 'The Britons themselves readily submit to recruitment into the army, paying tribute, and obligations imposed by the government so long as there are no abuses: these they do not take kindly to since they have been broken to obedience but not yet to slavery.'
- 14 At some stage in his career, the later emperor Titus (AD 79–81) served in Britain: Suetonius *Titus* 4.1: 'As a military Tribune in both Germany and Britain Titus gained a reputation for hard work no less than for his unassuming behaviour, as is clear from inscriptions and numerous statues and busts of him in both provinces.' While the actual date is not specified in the sources, Birley (4), p. 67 suggests this may have been the occasion.
- 15 Indus was a nobleman of the Treveri who had helped to suppress the revolt of Julius Florus in AD 21 and who gave his name to a cavalry squadron, the *Ala Indiana*; cf. *RIB*, I, 108: 'Danicus, trooper of Indus' cavalry squadron in the troop of Albinus with sixteen years' service, a tribesman of the Raurici, lies here. Fulvius Natalis and Flavius Bitucus had this set up under his will.'

7 TUMULT AND EXPANSION

- 1 Cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 39 (§79).
- 2 Tacitus, *Histories*, II, 66 (§82).
- 3 Cf. *Agricola*, 7 where Agricola's appointment as commander of the XX Valeria is indirectly attributed to the slowness with which it transferred its allegiance and the reported disloyalty of its Legate. See further E. Birley.

- 4 See A. R. Birley (2).
- 5 AD 78 as the traditional date for the arrival of Agricola in Britain (Salway [1], pp. 138, 167f.; Frere (1), p. 89) has been revised in recent years as a result of studies into the coinage of the period, Hanson, pp. 40–5.
- 6 Whether in fact the *Agricola* should properly be termed a biography is discussed by Mattingly in the Penguin translation, pp. 15f., and by Ogilvie and Richmond, pp. 11–20.
- 7 See further Kenworthy.
- 8 As in the case of Caesar's descriptions of 55 and 54 BC, Tacitus' account is clearly slanted, as evidenced by the brevity with which he describes the achievements of Cerialis and Frontinus. Without them Agricola could never have achieved as much as he did.
- 9 That is, the end of the campaigning season raised hopes among the Britons that they could recover losses sustained during the summer.
- 10 Agricola's motive in invading Anglesey may well have been a desire to complete and surpass what his previous commander, Paulinus, had achieved.
- 11 Tacitus here describes the corruption that could attend the *annona* tax, designed to guarantee grain supplies for the army and administration. While the Romans paid for such a levy of grain from the tribes, the price paid was below market value. A tribe unable to meet its commitment was obliged to purchase the shortfall from the only holder of large supplies – the Romans – but to do this at market value. This entailed handing over money for grain that simply remained in Roman granaries.
- 12 What Tacitus implies here is that closer destinations might be stipulated if the Roman official in charge was suitably bribed. As with many of the 'achievements' attributed to Agricola we need to ask if they were exceptional, as Tacitus implies, or whether stamping out corruption and the gradual Romanisation of a province were not requirements of all governors.
- 13 Tacitus' admiration for the 'noble savage' in contrast to the 'evils' of civilisation (cf. his *Germania*) is part of the rhetorical flourish that suffuses much of his work.
- 14 Tacitus' statement here has been variously interpreted, often based upon the now discredited equation of Agricola's fourth year as governor with the death of the Emperor Titus in AD 81. More likely, his statement is another rhetorical flourish pointing out the apparent attractions of a frontier based on the Forth–Clyde line, before rejecting it in favour of Rome's imperial mission of an empire without end.
- 15 The idea that Britain faced Spain in the west with Ireland between had a long history (Caesar, *Gallie War*, V, 13; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, IV, 102).
- 16 See further Reed.
- 17 Tacitus skilfully diverts attention away from the near disaster of the attack on the IX Legion by emphasising the ultimate Roman success. It is clear, however, that at this stage Agricola has lost the initiative and is forced merely to react to native moves.
- 18 See further Dobson and Mann.
- 19 As elsewhere, this and the speech of Agricola which follows are patent fictions. As such, they have merely been summarised.
- 20 A. R. Birley (4), pp. 211–14, 404–7.

8 WITHDRAWAL AND CONSOLIDATION

- 1 That withdrawal from the area was not total is cogently argued by Salway (1), pp. 150f.
- 2 A comprehensive collection of information on the XX Valeria Victrix is given by Malone. Among the ranks detailed are:
 - A Legionary Commander (*RIB*, I, 445 = Malone, pp. 76f.) From Chester (AD 90s): 'To Fortune the Home-Bringer and Aesculapius and his Health, the freedmen

and household of [Titus] Pomponius Mamilius Rufus Antistianus Funisulanus Vettonianus, son of Titus, of the Galerian voting tribe, Legate of Augustus, gave and dedicated this.³

- A Military Tribune (*Tribunus Angusticlavius*) (*RIB*, I, 450 = Malone pp. 91f.) From Chester (Severan date?): 'For the welfare of our Lords, the most invincible Emperors, to the Genius of the place, Flavius Longus, military Tribune of the XX Legion [Valeria Victrix, and] Longinus his son, from Samosata, fulfilled their vow.'⁴
- A Praefectus Castrorum (*RIB*, I, 490 = *Sourcebook* §599 = Malone, p. 99).
- A Senior Centurion (*L'Année Epigraphique* 1960.28 = Malone, p. 103) (Rome): 'To the spirits of the departed (and) to Sextus Flavius Quietus, son of Sextus, of the Quirine voting tribe, *Primus Pilus* (Senior Centurion) of the XX Valeria Victrix Legion, sent with the army on the Mauritanian campaign (AD 144–9) by the Emperor Antoninus Augustus; Prefect of the British Fleet; Varinia Crispinilla (set this up) to her most dutiful husband, along with Flavius Vindex and Flavius Quietus, his most dutiful sons.'⁵
- Centurions at Newstead (*RIB*, I, 2122, 2124 = *Sourcebook* §392, 403 = Malone, p. 109).
- A Centurion at Rough Castle (*RIB*, I, 2144 = Malone, p. 116): 'To Victory, the VI cohort of Nervii, under the acting command of Flavius Betto, Centurion of the XX Legion Valeria Victrix, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfilled its vow.'⁶

3 On urbanisation in Britain, see Wachter.

4 The Flavian emperors themselves belonged to the Quirine voting-tribe and extended the honour to citizens of their foundations.

5 The extremely fragmentary nature of the inscription suggests caution in attributing it to the reign of Trajan.

6 The last reference to the IX in Britain. By AD 122 it had been replaced by the VI Victrix.

7 Cf. Caesar, *Gallie War*, IV, 33.

9 THE HADRIANIC AND ANTONINE FRONTIERS

1 On the question of the British frontier, see further A. R. Birley (3).

2 Cf. an altar at Lympne (*RIB*, I, 66) 'To Neptune, Lucius Aufidius Pantera, Prefect of the British fleet (set up this) altar.' Pantera held his post in the mid-130s (Birley [4], p. 306).

3 Cf. from the same area (*RIB*, I, 1637) '(This work) of the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus the II Legion Augusta (built) under Aulus Platorius Nepos, Pro-P[raetorian] Legate.'

4 Cf. from Moresby (*RIB*, I, 801) '(This work) of the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, Father of his Country, the XX Legion Valeria Victrix (built).'

5 The continuation of resistance to the building of Hadrian's wall may lie behind a passing reference in Fronto *De Bello Parthico* 2 (addressed to Marcus Aurelius): 'Again, in the reign of your grandfather Hadrian how many soldiers were slain by the Jews, how many by the Britons!'

6 See further Jarrett.

7 See Salway (1), p. 183.

8 Salway (1), pp. 193f., 197–9.

9 Because of damage there is uncertainty whether the inscription refers to the second or third consulship of Antoninus: II would date the inscription to AD 139–40, making the building very early; III would date it to AD 140–44. See further Maxwell (2).

10 For the dating of the reference, see Salway (1), p. 199. Identification of the region is discussed by Hind (2) and Spaul. Pausanias may have confused the Brigantes of Britain with those of Germany.

- 11 See further Davies; cf. Bogaers (2), pp. 24–7; Wilkes; Speidel, p. 235f.; Frere (2), p. 329.
- 12 See further Hodgson.
- 13 It is generally believed that the wall referred to here is Hadrian's. However, an altar from Castlecary (§394) has been dated to the 180s, suggesting a Roman presence on the Antonine Wall as late as this.
- 14 See further Brassington.

10 ALBINUS AND THE SEVERAN DYNASTY

- 1 Worthy of note, though not of credence, are the claims found in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* that the rank of Caesar had once been offered to Albinus by Commodus, and that Severus actually contemplated abdicating in Albinus' favour (*Albinus*, 6, 4–5): 'These events (Albinus' defeat of German invaders into Gaul) impressed themselves upon Commodus and he offered Albinus the title of Caesar and the power to award bounties and to wear the scarlet cloak. All these distinctions, however, Albinus wisely declined, alleging that Commodus was looking for someone who would either perish with him or whom he could justifiably put to death.' (*Severus* 6, 9–10): 'At the same time (AD 193) Severus also considered abdicating in favour of Clodius Albinus, to whom, on the prompting of Commodus, the position of Caesar seems already to have been decreed. However, being very much afraid of Albinus and Niger, his opinion of whom was proved correct, he sent Heraclitus to take over Britain and Plautianus to seize Niger's children.' The reported complicity of Clodius Albinus in the murder of Pertinax (Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus*, 20, 9, calls him 'the author of Pertinax's murder') suggests instead an additional cause of friction between him and Severus, who posed as Pertinax's avenger: Orosius (5th C. AD), *Adversum paganos* (*Against the Pagans*), VII, 17, 1: 'Severus wished to be called Pertinax after the emperor of that name, whose death he had avenged.'
- 2 The reported attempt on Albinus' life is also given by *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Albinus*, 8.
- 3 According to *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Albinus*, 9, 1, however, the denunciation as a public enemy followed rather than preceded Albinus' initial victory over Lupus in Gaul (§166).
- 4 Shorter accounts of the battle are also given by Herodian, III, 7, and by *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Severus*, 10–11 and *Albinus*, 9. The latter two also provide variants on the circumstances of Albinus' death: 'Albinus fled the field and, according to many, stabbed himself, or, as others relate, was stabbed by his slave and taken to Severus hovering between life and death. In this way the prophecy previously given (that Albinus would fall into Severus' hands neither dead nor alive) proved correct. Many state as well that he was slain by soldiers who asked for a reward from Severus for his death' (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Albinus* 9, 3–4). 'Albinus' body was brought to Severus, who ordered him to be beheaded while still half-alive, and the head carried to Rome ... Albinus was defeated on February 19th' (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Severus* 11, 6–7).
- 5 See further Graham.
- 6 Caracalla was promoted from Caesar to joint-Augustus in AD 198.
- 7 See §16; cf. Salway (1), pp. 225f.
- 8 See further A. R. Birley (1).
- 9 On Adventus, see Rankov.
- 10 The location of Severus' death, York, is given by *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Severus*, 19, 1: 'Having conquered those tribes that seemed hostile to Britain and now an old man worn out by a very serious illness, Severus died at Eboracum (York) in Britain, in the eighteenth year of his reign.' Cf. Aurelius Victor, *Liber de Caesaribus*, 20, 27: 'Shortly

afterwards he died of disease in Britain, in the municipium called Eboracum (York), after a reign of eighteen years.'

- 11 See, however, Hassall.
- 12 *Liber de Caesaribus*, 20, 18: 'Undertaking a still greater enterprise, he fortified Britain, in as much as it was useful, with a wall built across the island from coast to coast on either side, having first driven back the enemy.'
- 13 *Severus*, 18, 2: 'He fortified Britain with a wall built across the island from coast to coast on either side, the crowning glory of his reign. For this he was awarded the title Britannicus.'
- 14 From Carpow (*JRS*, 55 [1965], pp. 223–4): 'Emperor a[nd Our Lord Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Piu]s F[elix ...].' See further Wright.
- 15 Cf. *RIB*, I, 1235 (Risingham), 1278 (High Rochester).
- 16 For water supplied to Chesters fort, cf. *RIB*, I, 1463: 'Water supplied for the 2nd cavalry squadron of Asturians under Ulpius Marcellus, Pro-Praetorian Legate of Augustus.'
- 17 The name of the Governor has been deliberately erased as an act of disgrace. Evidence from elsewhere suggests it may have been the Elder Gordian, destined to be emperor in AD 238.
- 18 Probably Twenthe in Holland.

11 USURPATION AND RECOVERY

- 1 The name was subsequently deleted, cf. Milestone from Brougham (*JRS*, 55, 1965, p. 224): 'For the Emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Casianius Latinianus Postumus Augustus Pius Felix, the *civitas* of the Carvetii (set this up).'
- 2 Against the Bacaudae, marauding peasants and other disaffected provincials, in north-west Gaul.
- 3 For the value of Victor and Eutropius as sources, see Shiel, pp. 15–20.
- 4 For a discussion of the extent to which Carausius controlled north Gaul, see P. J. Casey (1).
- 5 Later issues of coins by Carausius mentioning specifically II Augusta and XX Valeria demonstrate clearly that he had the support of forces at least in Britannia Superior. See further Johnson (1), p. 28.
- 6 Carausius. The panegyricists never in fact accord him the honour of mentioning his name.
- 7 Presumably the Rhine and its tributaries since Carausius controlled the rivers of north Gaul. For a detailed discussion of the campaign see Shiel, pp. 3–10.
- 8 Each of the gs represents one of the three Emperors: Carausius, Maximian and Diocletian. Significantly, neither Maximian nor Diocletian returned the 'compliment'. On the coinage of Carausius in general, see Shiel, pp. 166–201.
- 9 The third g reveals that the coin, ostensibly one of Maximian's, was in fact minted by Carausius, as the mint-mark 'ML' (London) shows. Other issues bestow the same 'honour' on Diocletian.
- 10 See further Shiel, pp. 5–7.
- 11 Cf. Aurelius Victor (4th C. AD), *Liber de Caesaribus*, 39, 40–1: 'Six years later Allectus treacherously overthrew Carausius. He had been put in charge of finances by Carausius, but alarmed at his own misdeeds and the resultant prospect of his execution, he had criminally seized power.'
- 12 See §235.

12 REORGANISATION AND THE DYNASTY OF CONSTANTIUS

- 1 These included not only Constantine and Maxentius but also Maximian himself, who twice emerged from retirement to resume the rank of Augustus, Licinius, elevated by

- Galerius at the Conference at Carnuntum in 308, and Maximinus, Galerius' Caesar, who succeeded to the throne on the death of Galerius in 311.
- 2 The late date of the *Notitia* makes it uncertain how much of the information it contains is relevant to the early fourth century. See Johnson (2), p. 26; Ward (2); Mann.
 - 3 See §262.
 - 4 The text of the *Notitia* reads '1st', though this would seem to be a scribal error, since the 2nd is recorded as being stationed at Great Chesters.
 - 5 A possible conflation of two entries resulting in the erroneous placing of the 1st cohort of Hadrian's Dacians at Castlesteads instead of at Birdoswald (Banna) where their presence is attested; see Rivet and Smith, p. 221.
 - 6 Almost certainly a transposition of the unit's name to its station, which should probably read Uxelodunum (Stanwix).
 - 7 A lacuna unnecessarily inserted by the editor.
 - 8 The order of the *Notitia* suggests we should here find a mention of Mais (Bowness), so that it would seem that somehow the text has become corrupt at this point. Axelodunum = Uxelodunum (Stanwix).
 - 9 For the rank of Count (*Comes*) see Johnson (1), pp. 144f.; Johnson (2), pp. 26f.
 - 10 On the question of the frequency of the visits, see Salway (1), pp. 327f.; J. Casey.
 - 11 The later association of Constans' visit with the Aereani, whose task it was to gather information concerning the tribes beyond the northern frontier of Britain, suggests there may have been hostilities either threatening or begun in the area of Hadrian's wall. See further Salway (1), pp. 351–3.

13 DANGER, DECLINE AND COLLAPSE

- 1 There is some evidence that the reference to Britain here may have been included simply for oratorical effect; see further Tomlin (2), pp. 473–5.
- 2 See further Tomlin (1).
- 3 Text in doubt.
- 4 The relevance of references associating Theodosius' naval victories over the Saxons with Britain is questioned by Bartholomew (2), pp. 173–82, Cotterill, p. 229.
- 5 The location of this province remains very much a matter of dispute. Was it a newly constituted fifth province (Dornier) or the renaming of an already existing unit (Johnson [2], p. 98; cf. Salway [1], p. 411; Hind [1])?
- 6 See further P. J. Casey (2).
- 7 On the Chronicle as a source, see Muhlberger.
- 8 Zosimus has evidently conflated the Count Theodosius who rescued Britain from the disaster of 367, with his son of the same name who was appointed to the throne of the Eastern Empire following the defeat and death of Valens in battle against the Goths at Adrianople in 378.
- 9 Clearly an error of scribal transcription or spelling. Other writers on the subject place Gratian's death at Lugdunum (Lyons): Prosper Tiro (5th C. AD), *Chronicon* 1180–3 (AD 384): 'In the consulship of Ricimer and Clearchus ... Maximus was made Emperor in Britain as a result of a mutiny of the troops, and soon he crossed from there to Gaul. Gratian was defeated at Paris through the treachery of Merobaudis, his military commander, and fled, but was captured at Lugdunum (Lyons) and killed. Maximus made his son Victor his partner on the throne.'
- 10 On the evidence of Gildas, see Lapidge and Dumville; Thompson (2).
- 11 This addition of wall building to the narrative, presumably attributing to the late fourth century the construction of the Antonine wall, must inevitably bring the validity of Gildas' whole account into question. See, however, Salway (1), p. 405, n. 4, who

- suggests Gildas may be representing in a garbled form Roman attempts to restore damaged sections of the northern frontier.
- 12 Miller; Salway (1), pp. 419–21.
 - 13 A garbled reference to the Saxon-shore forts?
 - 14 See further Thompson (1).
 - 15 According to Prosper Tiro, *Chronicon* 1230 (AD 406), ‘The Vandals and Alans crossed the Rhine and invaded Gaul on December 31st.’
 - 16 Cf. Sozomenus (5th C. AD), *Ecclesiastical History*, IX, 11: ‘When he (Gratian) too was put to death after no more than four months, they next chose Constantine, thinking that since he bore this name, he would gain firm control of the empire. It was for this reason they appear to have chosen the others too for usurpation.’
 - 17 The unsystematic approach of Zosimus to history means the following account is something of a patchwork culled from various parts of his work.
 - 18 A hint of Constantine’s success against the barbarians on the continent is given by Zosimus, VI, 3, 2: ‘In a mighty battle the Romans proved victorious, slaughtering the majority of the barbarians.’
 - 19 That Constantine’s hold on Gaul was not without its own troubles is suggested by the *Chronicle of 452*, AD 410: ‘At that time with the multitude of the enemy gaining the upper hand, Roman strength was utterly diminished. Britain was devastated by an attack of the Saxons, part of Gaul was laid waste by the Vandals and Alans, and what remained was held by the usurper Constantine.’ See further Bartholomew (1); Jones and Casey and Burgess who discuss the problematic dating of entries in the *Chronicle* and its interpretation.
 - 20 Relations between the two had in fact deteriorated following Constans’ delivery of Didymus and Verenianus to his father: Zosimus, VI, 5, 2: ‘Constans was again despatched to Spain by his father and took with him the general Justus. Gerontius became angry at this, and having won over the soldiers stationed there he induced the barbarians within Celtic lands (Gaul) to revolt against Constantine. Constantine was unable to oppose them since the greater part of his army was in Spain ...’
 - 21 Rivet and Smith, p. 102, argue that since the remainder of Zosimus’ narrative in this chapter concerns affairs in Italy, the true reading here is more likely to be Brettia, i.e. Bruttium. Contrary to the general opinion of commentators, Thompson (1), p. 310, argues that it was in fact against the whole Roman Empire that Britain rebelled, and he sees as the instigators of the revolt not the urban population but the peasantry, cf. Bartholomew (1).
 - 22 That is Aëtius, who from the mid-420s till his death in 454 was the chief military force in the west.
 - 23 That is Vortigern. On the evidence for his life and career see Ward (1).
 - 24 The final years of Roman Britain are also recorded by Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (*History of the English Church*), I, 9–16, though so closely does he usually follow his sources (Orosius for Maximus to Constantine III, Gildas 14–25 for the two Roman expeditions and the Saxon invasion) that reproduction here would add little to the account. For a translation see Baedae, *Opera historica*, trans. King, Heinemann (1930). The sources for the end of Roman Britain are discussed at length by Dumville.

14 RELIGION

- 1 See further Henig, pp. 68–94, Irby-Massie.
- 2 See Henig, pp. 69f. On the imperial cult in Britain see Fishwick (1).
- 3 For the meaning of the term (‘trader by sea?’), see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 365, n. 6.
- 4 See further Salway (1), pp. 676ff; Henig, pp. 19–24, 206–7; Chadwick.
- 5 The overtones of political power that Caesar gives here are stated more forcibly by Dio Chrysostom (1st–2nd C. AD), *Discourse*, XLIX, 8: ‘Without them (the Druids) kings

- could do nothing nor make any plans, with the result that it was they in fact who ruled, and the kings were their servants and ministered to their will ...'; cf. Strabo, IV, 4, 4, §310; Diodorus Siculus, V, 31, 2–5, §311.
- 6 Clearly an instance of Caesar 'Romanising' his information.
 - 7 Geographer of the second to first century BC.
 - 8 Opinion is divided as to whether Pliny here refers to the moon itself or more specifically to the sixth day of its course.
 - 9 See further Ross; Norman; Salway (1), p. 666.
 - 10 Apparently of Gallic origin.
 - 11 The fact that Antenociticus/Anociticus is found only at Benwell suggests he was either a very localised native divinity like Coventina or imported by the auxiliary unit stationed there.
 - 12 Lenus had a major sanctuary at Trier.
 - 13 Alexander Severus, AD 222–35.
 - 14 Originally from Aquitaine.
 - 15 From north-east Gaul.
 - 16 Cf. §202.
 - 17 On the identification, see Haverfield, *Victoria County History, Hants I*, p. 283; Goodchild, *Antiquity* 27 (1953), pp. 100–2; Toynbee, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 16 (1953), p. 19.
 - 18 Cf. from Aylesford, Kent (*Britannia* 17 [1986], p. 428, no. 2), which may have Christian connotations: 'A gift to the gods by which Butu has perished and the items which [...] neither health nor safety unless and until in the house of God ...'.
 - 19 Distinction between German and Celtic is at times difficult, though the following are probable enough.
 - 20 See Harris and Harris.
 - 21 That is Cybele from Asia Minor. Evidence of the worship of Cybele comes from inscriptions by Dendrophori, branch-bearers who were associated with her worship: a funerary urn from Dunstable, Beds. (*Britannia*, 11 [1980], pp. 406–7): 'Regillinus presented the urn of the Dendrophori of Verulamium.'
 - 22 See Henig, pp. 97–109; Walters; Vermaseren; Clausen.
 - 23 On Christianity in Britain, see Barley and Hanson.
 - 24 Evidently corrupt: Lindinensium? (Lincoln), Legionensium? (Caerleon). See Rivet and Smith, pp. 49f.
 - 25 See Clark, pp. 21f.; *Britannia*, 10, (1979), p. 353, n. 70.
 - 26 Morris, cf. Johnson (2), p. 32; Salway (1), p. 720; Frere (1), p. 321.
 - 27 Thomas, p. 48.
 - 28 Salway (1), p. 721, argues against setting the event in the reign of Diocletian on the grounds that actual control of Britain lay in the hands of Constantius Caesar, who merely closed the churches: Eusebius (4th C. AD), *Historia ecclesiastica (History of the Church)*, VIII, 13, 13: 'Constantius took no part in the war against us (Christians), but kept the devout under his rule free from harm and harsh treatment, nor did he destroy the church buildings or take any other fresh measures against us.' Cf. Lactantius (4th C. AD), *De mortibus persecutorum (On the Deaths of the Persecutors)*, 15: 'For lest he appear to disagree with the instructions of his superiors, Constantius allowed the assemblies to be destroyed, that is their walls, which could be rebuilt, but the true temple of God, which lies in men, he kept unharmed.'
 - 29 See Brown; Myers; Wood, pp. 260f.
 - 30 In other contexts, *gratia* (grace) could be a dirty word, implying political patronage and therefore corruption.
 - 31 The account of Germanus' visits to Britain is repeated almost verbatim by Bede, I, 17–21.

15 GOVERNMENT, COMMERCE AND SOCIETY

- 1 Frere (1), pp. 181–98.
- 2 Cf. §492.
- 3 Frere (1), p. 197.
- 4 Responsible for the maintenance of public buildings, streets and drainage.
- 5 Frere (1), pp. 249f.; Salway (1), pp. 575–7; Liversidge, pp. 26–9.
- 6 The right-hand section of this tombstone was doubtless intended for the inscription of Senecio, but at some stage was usurped: ‘To the spirits of the departed. Claudius Catiotus lived sixty years.’
- 7 The abbreviations used in the inscription are open to various interpretation. Thus, *Sen.* has been taken as *Senator* = decurion, if the office is a civilian one, or fourth-century non-commissioned officer if the context is military, or *Senior*, the third element in Flavius Martius’ name. Similarly, the C has been variously interpreted as *Civitas* or *Cohort*. See further Salway (2), pp. 246f.
- 8 Every fifth year (hence quinquennales) the Duoviri were given the task of filling vacant seats in the Ordo and revising tax registers; cf. Frere (1), p. 195.
- 9 Presumably represented by the Council, cf. Frere (1), pp. 196f.; Salway (1), pp. 532f.
- 10 I omit here consideration of the Cassiterides, the Tin Isles, which have sometimes been identified with the Scillies but are better located off north-west Spain. See further Rivet and Smith, p. 43; Hawkes.
- 11 The usual description of the oblong piece of lead recorded by Leland but subsequently lost. Whittick, however, regards it as a commemorative lead plaque which does not guarantee lead production in the Mendips in AD 49.
- 12 Cf. Webster.
- 13 Cf. *RIB*, II, 1, 2404.10: ‘(Property) of the Emperor Vespasian Augustus. British lead. [From the s]ilver works. VEB. (Property) of the Emperor. Ti(berius) C[laudius] Tri(ferna).’ See further, *Britannia* 27 (1996), pp. 446–8. Triferna’s Roman name also makes him possibly an imperial supervisor rather than simply a private contractor.
- 14 A British provenance comes from interpretation of LVI as the British legion VI Valeria Victrix, cf. LEG XX also on an ingot from Sassenay (*RIB*, II, 1, 2404.72b).
- 15 The restoration of Bogaers (1) for the original restoration: ‘King and Legate of Augustus in Britain’. For the career of Cogidubnus, see Barrett (1); A. R. Birley (4), pp. 208–10; Cunliffe (1), pp. 21–9, 54f.
- 16 Cf. From York (*Britannia* 8 [1977], 430–1): [...] and the Spirit of the place [and the divine power of the Au]gusti, Lucius Viducius [... Pla]cidus who has his home at Velocasium (Rouen), [... t]rader, [gave] this arch and shrine [... in the consulship] of Gratus and [Seleucus] (AD 221).
- 17 Cf. bun-shaped ingots from Parys mountain, Anglesey (*RIB*, II, 1, 2403.1,2) inscribed: Jul(ius) Es [...]
- 18 See Ogilvie and Richmond, pp. 215f.
- 19 That is from W. Hungary. See further, Kennedy.
- 20 Title of the annual magistrate in some Italian towns.
- 21 See further Bowman, pp. 13–19. For similar tablets, cf. §152.
- 22 These appear to be routine reports of inspection. Bowman and Thomas record up to twenty-seven instances from Vindolanda.
- 23 The *optio* was a deputy centurion, the *curator* either a rank in units with cavalry or someone with a specific function.
- 24 Evidently the standard mode of address from an ordinary soldier to the commander of his cohort.
- 25 Use of the term ‘brother’ indicates equality of rank rather than a blood relationship, i.e. that Karus, like Cerialis, commands a cohort of auxiliaries.
- 26 Comparison of handwriting shows that the letter comes from Cerialis.

- 27 Use of the term, lit. 'my lord', suggests that Crispinus is of superior rank to Cerialis and evidently well enough placed to recommend the Prefect to the Governor, who must be Lucius Neratius Marcellus, present in Britain in AD 103.
- 28 The uncertainty is caused by the incomplete text, i.e. 'the day before the 1st of Ma[rch] or Ma[y]'.
- 29 Commander of a troop of cavalry.
- 30 The letter is evidently only a draft, written on a tablet also used for a list of household goods probably compiled by one of Cerialis' servants.
- 31 The *modius*, a measure for corn and other bulky materials, is estimated as sufficient to supply the daily energy requirements of seven soldiers.
- 32 The references 'to myself' (1.3), 'to you' (1.25f., 29), and 'to father' (1.7, 33) suggest to Bowman and Thomas a firm of contractors consisting of two brothers and their father.
- 33 The use of + indicates that damage to the text may mask an originally larger number.
- 34 Soldier seconded to special duties.
- 35 Since this was a year's pay for a soldier at the time, the quantities involved are clearly large-scale.
- 36 The *sextarius* was *c.* 1 pint, or one-sixteenth of a *modius* dry measure.
- 37 Cf. Bowman and Thomas, 581 (= *Britannia* 27 [1996], pp. 307–23) for further lists of foodstuffs supplied, including numerous references to chickens. A list of ostensibly more personal goods, including prices, is given by Bowman and Thomas, 596 (= *Britannia* 27 [1996], pp. 300–7).
- 38 The Saturnalia was the main midwinter festival, during which masters and slaves exchanged roles for a time.
- 39 The as was a sixteenth of a denarius.
- 40 The loss of the number involved in the date prevents certainty as to the exact date.
- 41 Lit. 'parents', but Bowman and Thomas suggest that since Veldeius and Chrauttius are not related, since their names have different ethnic origins, such words as 'brother' and 'sister' and 'parent' are being used in a more generalised sense.
- 42 This is probably the more correct form of the name, with Veldeius as a shortened version.
- 43 Absolute certainty as to whether the names belong to soldiers or their slaves cannot be ascertained.
- 44 Used to support the hypocaust.
- 45 Cf. *Britannia*, 21 (1990), pp. 275–83.
- 46 Cf. §585.

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